

THE LOYAL SPECTRE



CAMERON & FERGUSON, GLASGOW

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THE
LOYAL SPECTRE;

OR,

THE TRUE HEARTS OF ATLANTA.

BY

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CHAPTER I.

Yankee and Georgian.

AT the close of a hot summer day, two young men sat by an open window, in the parlour of a fine Southern mansion in Georgia.

They were very different in appearance, in character, in worldly position, in all outward and visible things from which the world forms its estimation of men.

The younger was named Arthur Arment. He had nearly finished his twenty-first year—was handsome, of a true Southern type, with raven hair, brown eyes, regular features, and a symmetrical form. His black hair was abundant—a possession for which he might well have been envied; his brown eyes were large and expressive; his complexion was clear and rather pale; his rich lips were finely cut and arched; his symmetrical form was inclined to be tall and slim; his voice was musical, though somewhat languid; his upper lip was ornamented, not disfigured, by a delicate black mustache; his dress was elegant and tasteful, though carelessly worn.

Such was the external appearance of Arthur Arment, a scion of one of the really first—one of the best—families of Georgia. His grandfather had been a noted man during the Revolution. His father, Jefferson Arment, a wealthy planter and proprietor, had been prominent in the State and national councils, and had gone to his grave in the prime of life and full of honours. Arthur was proud of his ancestry, and justly so, for neither public nor private history recorded any mean or dishonourable action performed by any of them. He had always resolved that, if he could not increase the good reputation of the family, he would do nothing to sully it. As he had not, as yet, attempted anything grand or heroic, his virtues were principally of a negative kind.

His mother having died while he was quite young, Arthur found himself, at the death of his father, the sole heir of his large property in money, land and negroes. There was, however, a condition annexed to his heirship, that diminished its value for the time. Jefferson Arment, by his will, had made his brother, Madison Arment, sole guardian of his son, and the trustee of his property, until Arthur should reach the age of twenty-four. He

had wished that the young man should be well educated, and should fully arrive at "years of discretion," before entering upon the control of such an extensive and valuable estate. The two brothers, Jefferson and Madison, always had loved each other with a true brotherly love. In addition to the well-known integrity and honour of Madison Arment, he was a rich man, and could have no interest in managing Arthur and his affairs contrary to the will of the young man's father.

Arthur never had entertained any objection to this arrangement, for he honoured the memory of his father, and respected his uncle. Whatever was planned by the one and carried out by the other could not but seem right in his eyes. He had the use of as much money as he could wish; he was not limited in going where he pleased, nor in doing what he desired; his estate was well and prosperously managed, and he was in no hurry to assume the labour and care necessary to its possession.

The young gentleman owned the bodies, and partially controlled the spirits, of some three hundred negroes. Three hundred slaves, with a proportionate amount of productive land, formed a very valuable property at that time. The mansion in which he was seated was connected with the principal plantation, situated on the Flint river, a few miles from Fayetteville. It was a large and roomy building, with elegant grounds. A furnished house in Atlanta also belonged to the estate.

The other young man was seven or eight years older than Arthur. He was a native of New Hampshire, and was named Seth Staples. Seth was light-haired and blue-eyed, with ruddy cheeks and a sandy beard. He was not handsome, but would have been called "fine looking," for there was a nobility of expression in his features, and a quickness of perception in his eyes, which could not fail to attract attention, and to command admiration. He seemed to possess considerable strength, with a nervous, wiry organization, and always spoke with promptness, clearness, and decision.

Arthur Arment had made the acquaintance of Staples, and had contracted a friendship with him, at a New England college, which the former had entered as a Freshman, while the latter was a Senior. Soon becoming disgusted with the routine and discipline of college life, Arthur Arment quitted it, just as Staples graduated, and easily prevailed upon his friend, whose worldly wealth amounted to little besides his clothes and his books, to accompany him to his home in the South, in the nominal capacity of tutor. The salary was liberal; Arthur studied what he pleased and when he pleased; he took his friend into the same society which he frequented; the residence was a splendid one; means were afforded to Staples to make such experiments and pursue such studies as he chose; he was treated as a friend, more than as an instructor, and his position was, in every sense, a pleasant one.

There was only one person who objected to Seth. Madison Arment, Arthur's uncle and guardian, did not like the young man, although he was gentleman enough to conceal his antipathy from its object. He had nothing to allege against Staples, but he disliked Yankees; and the dislike so increased, that it finally amounted to positive hatred. The very name, Seth Staples, he said, was suggestive of wooden nutmegs, clock-peddlers and abolitionists. But Seth was the friend and tutor of Arthur, and, as the uncle made it a point not to attempt to control the likes and dislikes of his ward, he always treated the New Englander with ceremonious politeness.

Seth Staples *was* a Yankee, but seemed to have little of the Yankee desire for wealth, and faculty of acquiring it, for his abilities and opportunities were such that he might have largely bettered his circumstances. After the rebellion had broken out, and had acquired formidable strength and consistency, he found himself in an awkward position, and it was upon that subject that the two friends were conversing at the close of that hot summer day.

"I am sorry, Seth," said young Arment, continuing the conversation. "It is useless to tell you *how* sorry I am; but I see no help for it. It is a pity that the abolitionists could not have minded their own business, and it is a pity that our people could not have been satisfied to let well enough alone; but the evil has been done, the separation has been made, and we are now at war. It is not to be expected that you, who are hostile to the Southern side, by birth, by education, and by conscientious belief, will be permitted to remain here, even if you should wish to."

"But you, also," interrupted Staples; "are you not hostile to the Southern idea and action?"

"Not a bit of it, my dear fellow. We have talked it over often enough, and have settled the matter, abstractly, morally, scientifically, and politico-economically; but words are cheap, and niggers are worth money. Principle won't feed and clothe a man, while property will procure him luxuries as well as necessities. If I should be hostile to the South, I would oppose myself and my property, my bread-and-butter and my books, my cigars and my wine."

"What do you propose to do?"

"That is easily answered. I propose to do nothing. I shall maintain a masterly inactivity. I shall plant myself on my reserved rights, whatever they may be. I look upon this war, and those who are waging it, as a great game of children playing with fire. It is very dangerous, and some of them will get hurt; but the sport does not tempt me to burn my fingers. I hope to look at it, from this 'loophole of retreat,' as sadly as I must, and as philosophically as I can."

"Suppose you are not permitted to do so, what will then be your

course? Events may carry you along with them, whether you wish it or not."

"My dear fellow, you seem to have forgotten your philosophy. The pupil has outstripped the tutor. When circumstances change, my course may be determined by them. In the mean time I shall wait. 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I have no fear of events. Events are men in disguise, and I recognize no power in any man to change my feelings, my thoughts, my will. I cannot be forced to fight, and am sure that I have no desire to. Besides, until I am twenty-four years of age, I am not responsible for myself. My uncle Madison is my guardian, and on his head be it, if I fall into wrong. He has purchased substitutes enough to keep me out of the war, and I do not intend to crawl into the pit of my own accord."

"Would you not fight for your negroes?"

"To keep them, you mean? No, Seth; I would do no such thing. If I had a dog that refused to stay with me, I would not compel him to do so, unless I absolutely needed him for a watchdog, or unless I had reason to fear that he would fall into worse hands. I should not object to their having their freedom, if it could be given to them consistently with their interests, and with the interests of all concerned. But I do not object to owning them, mind you; and I cannot see how their condition could be bettered, as affairs now stand."

"I suppose that question is decided for you, by the time this war is ended, if not sooner."

"I hope it may, for I confess myself incompetent to its solution. Whatever may be the issue of the war, or whatever may happen during its progress, I foresee that I shall be out of pocket. My southern friends will look upon me with distrust, if not with suspicion, and my northern friends will capture my cotton and my negroes, if they can, as if I was the hottest rebel breathing. Well, I hope I shall not be childish enough to weep over the loss. I had the misfortune to be born rich. I know that that sounds strangely, but you have too much sense to laugh at it. There is that within me, which if circumstances should concur to draw it out, might make me do something great or heroic. I would be childish to object to any circumstances that would make a man of me. If I thought I was dependent on a certain amount of land, or a certain number of negroes, I should have a much poorer opinion of myself than I now have."

"Perhaps, Arthur, you may grow more worldly-minded as you become older."

"I hope not, for I think I am sufficiently worldly—that I am practical to a fault. But, this is idle talk. The mournful fact is before us, that you must leave, and that is trouble enough. Uncle Madison has procured a pass for you, which will take you to the Yankee lines, wherever they may be. He was very kind to do so,

considering that he really dislikes you, and can't help it. We will drive up to Atlanta to-morrow, and I will draw some money, and get gold if it is possible. You must take all I choose to give you, for I know that you would do the same by me, if our positions were reversed."

"I shall be very sorry to go, Arthur. But perhaps it is for the best. I have been living here with you, lapped in luxury, and dreaming away life, until I had really forgotten what I was made for. Perhaps I may turn out to be something after all. Who can say that I was not made for a modern Napoleon? Like the man who had never played the fiddle, I can't tell until I try. I shall be sorry to give up our old ways, our old books, our old studies, our old experiments. When we were succeeding so well with our investigations of spiritualism and clairvoyance, or whatever the misty, moonshiny science may be named, it seems a pity to break them off."

"Yes, it is indeed a pity. We were getting along so finely, and had our table trained until it was as sensible as a circus-mule. I suppose the thunders of war will kill the rappings, and the smell of burning sulphur will drive away the spirits. But we must continue to experiment, Seth, and if we can establish a mental telegraph, across the lines of the contending armies, who knows how it may affect the price of cotton? But I fear that I shall care for no more of such things. I have only two wishes at present, that you may remain with me, and that I might see my cousin, Carrie Chappelle."

"Has she not returned from the North?"

"Yes. She has contrived to enter the mystic circle of those unpleasant and inconvenient *lines*, but I don't know where she is. Uncle Madison is her guardian, for she is an orphan, as well as myself, and he must be presumed to know something about her, but he chooses to preserve a very mysterious silence on the subject, and does not vouchsafe any information. I will compel him to break his silence before long, or will penetrate the mystery myself, for I am not a child, although I am a ward. I wonder whether I shall admire her as well as I once thought I should."

"It is useless to wonder, Arthur, and it is contrary to your philosophy. When your fate comes to you, you will know it."

"My philosophy does not prevent me from being impatient. As for you, you go away from your fate, and you know it. What shall I say to Laura Clymer?"

"Say nothing to her, Arthur," retorted the Northerner. "Say nothing to me. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. I have a letter to write, and must pack up for my journey."

"Ah! Speaking of Laura reminds you of a letter. Very well. You may trust me to deliver it. Don't forget your money-belt, Seth, for you may need it. When you reach the North, perhaps I

will send you a cargo of cotton through the blockade as far as Havana, and that will make you a rich man among the Yankees."

"I want nothing contraband, Arthur. Good-night."

"Good-night. We will drive up to Atlanta, directly after breakfast, and there you will take the cars for the North."

The two friends then separated for the night, and the next morning, as had been arranged, they drove to Atlanta, where they bid each other a long farewell.

CHAPTER II.

Not One of them!

It was more than two years since the separation mentioned in the last chapter, when Arthur Arment was again seated at the open window of his elegant plantation mansion. There was scarcely any change about the house or the grounds attached to it. There was nothing to indicate that the land had been desolated by three years of bloody war. All was peaceful, serene and smiling. The earth had not failed to yield her increase, the rain had fallen upon the just and the unjust, and the harvests had been as abundant as when the same flag quietly and grandly ruled the whole country.

In the owner of that fine house and those fertile acres, there was little change to note. The delicate black mustache had become longer and heavier, the form had grown fuller and more manly, but that was all—if we may except a shade of care, a suspicion of suffering, that seemed to have added to the years of the young man. It was not a gloomy shadow that occasionally crossed his face—it was a sad one, as if his cause for sorrow was continual, not transient. There was nothing fretful or impatient about his demeanour, but he sat and puffed his cigar with an abstracted and thoughtful air, while the same shade of sadness stole over his fine countenance at intervals.

As he was thus engaged, a gentleman entered the room, unannounced. The new-comer was a fine-looking, elderly person, tall, rather than stout, with iron-gray hair, and dark, expressive eyes. His countenance spoke of great strength of will and tenacity of purpose, of sternness, tempered by benevolence. He was plainly but neatly dressed, and carried his hat and cane in his hand, as he entered the room.

"Good evening, uncle Madison," said Arthur, as he rose and extended his hand.

"Good evening, Arthur," answered his uncle, with a pleasant smile. "I find you communing with your cigar, as usual. You seem to be as lonely and listless as ever."

"Yes," sighed the young man, as he seated himself. "I sup-

pose you would call me lonely and listless, but I know that I am weary."

"Weary! Of what, in the name of common sense, can you be weary, unless of your own life of inaction and utter idleness? You have nothing to do, and you never trouble yourself to seek anything to occupy your mind or your body."

"As for my mind, it is busy enough, too busy to please me. I have sufficient exercise for my body, and was never in better health. It is true that I have nothing to do, for you have kindly relieved me of all business cares."

"You know that it is no fault of mine, Arthur. I have not desired the management of the estate, and what I have done has been in accordance with the express directions of your father, contained in his will."

"My dear uncle, I was not complaining. I have never questioned the justice or propriety of my father's will, and have never objected to your management of the estate. On the contrary, the arrangement is an admirable one, and fully proves my father's wisdom and foresight. The estate, as far as I am able to judge, could not have been better managed, and I must confess that I am glad that the responsibility of its control is not on my shoulders, particularly during the existing unpleasant state of affairs."

"What, then, is there to weary you? I wish that you had some of my responsibility to bear, so that you might be wearied to some purpose."

"Don't be so cruel, uncle. I hardly think that you would really wish me to have the management of the estate, for you know that I would not manage it, if I could help myself, to suit your patron saint, Jefferson Davis. I am weary in my mind, uncle, and weary at heart, weary with wishing that there might be an end to this fruitless, destructive struggle."

"It will be ended, Arthur, when we achieve our independence."

"If that is to be the only end, it will be endless. For my part, I was weary of it at the beginning, and my weariness increases with its continuance. I know—at least, I feel—how vain, how suicidal it is, and it pains me to see such a splendid people throwing away their lives and fortunes so uselessly."

"Do you never feel a desire to mingle in the glorious strife, to share the undying honour of the heroes who are fighting for liberty, for the inviolability of their homes, for all they hold dear?"

"Where did you learn that parrot-talk, uncle? I don't mean to be disrespectful, but you speak that speech as mechanically as a parrot repeats the words that have been taught to it."

"It comes from the heart, Arthur, and I am surprised that it falls so coldly upon your ears. I am surprised that you can speak and act as you do, when you remember the glories of your ancestors, who always were the first to array themselves on the side of liberty and country. It hardly seems possible that the blood of

the Arments runs in your veins. Your grandfather would have acted differently."

"Have you had any communication from the spirit of my grandfather?" retorted the young man. "I cannot think that you are authorized to speak for him, or to pronounce so positively on the course *he* would have taken. The blood of the Arments *does* run in my veins, uncle Madison. There never was an Arment of them all who loved liberty more than I do, or who would dare and bear more than I would for the cause of liberty, and I can assure you that my blood often boils when I think of the tyranny under which the people are labouring."

"What tyranny do you mean, Arthur?"

"The tyranny of Jefferson Davis and his coadjutors in this attempt to build up an *empire* for themselves upon the ruins of our glorious old Union."

"Do you know that your talk is treasonable, Arthur? It is rank, bitter, malignant treason, and it is my duty as your uncle and your guardian, to warn you that you *must* put a bridle on your tongue, that you *must* be more careful how you speak, if you value your own safety. You are known, already, as an enemy of the government. Your actions and your speech have been severely commented upon in high places, and your arrest has been seriously spoken of. My influence has hitherto been sufficient to prevent such action; but, I warn you, that, unless you change your course, the time *may* come when forbearance will cease to be a virtue with the authorities, and you will be no longer able to escape the consequences of your treasonable conduct."

"I accept the consequences, uncle, whatever they may be," answered the young man, as he threw his extinguished cigar out of the window. "I care no more for them than I do for that wasted cigar end. Imprisonment and confiscation, I suppose, are the worst evils that would be likely to afflict me. My liberty is worth nothing to me, unless I can use it as I please; and property, without liberty, would be only an eye-sore and an aggravation."

"You talk wildly, Arthur," said Madison Arment, with a troubled look at his nephew, "and I earnestly hope that you will not express such sentiments to any one except myself. I am sorry to find you in such a mood, particularly when I came to speak to you concerning yourself and your affairs, in connection with the present condition of the country."

"What would you have now, uncle? What new sacrifice can I make—or, rather, what new sacrifice can be made for me by you—to further the ambitious schemes of Jefferson Davis and his friends."

"I do not speak in behalf of President Davis, who is only the chosen ruler of our people, to whom we have delegated certain limited powers. I speak in behalf of your bleeding and suffering country, that needs your aid in this hour of her trial. You know

that the hordes of Yankee mercenaries, led by the unscrupulous Sherman, have pressed down through the State, although slaughtered at every step by our heroic defenders, until they are now almost at the gates of Atlanta, and the city is virtually besieged. The question is, shall Atlanta be given up to the rapacious invader, and be trampled under the feet of the Vandals of the North?"

"Really, uncle, I hardly know how to answer that long speech. As to whether Atlanta shall be evacuated or not, that is a question for Mr. Davis and his generals, and I have no doubt that they will decide it in the affirmative before long."

"But you, Arthur—are you not willing to lift a finger to prevent such a catastrophe?"

"What can I do to prevent it, uncle, supposing it *to be* a catastrophe? Shall I shoulder a musket, and run away with the rest when Sherman flanks us?"

"I do not ask you to carry a musket, although there are many as good men as you, if not better, who are now marching in the ranks."

"Running, you mean," interrupted Arthur.

"Retreating only to lure the enemy on to certain destruction. But I do not ask you to imitate their example, or to peril your life in any way, though you might have had an important and honourable position, if you had desired it, and might have upheld the ancient glory of the Arments on many a victorious field."

"Uncle, you are growing eloquent. You make me feel already as if a bullet was in me."

"But I do ask you," continued Madison Arment, not noticing the interruption, "to throw the weight of your position and influence on the side of your country at this crisis. I know that your example, no less than your words and actions, have had a very pernicious effect thus far, leading some of our young men to draw back from entering the service, leading others to be lukewarm in our defence, and luring some even into open disloyalty. They feel and say that if Arthur Arment can persist in a treasonable course with impunity, they see no reason why *they* should not be allowed to imitate his example. It is my duty to tell you that this can go no further. It *must be stopped*, or there will be an example made of some one. Is it not better for you to aid your country in the hour of her peril, and thus gain the gratitude and respect of all true patriots, than to see the arm of offended authority uplifted to punish you for your contumacy?"

"Uncle," answered Arthur Arment, leaning back with a settled expression upon his features, and fixing his dark eyes upon the earnest countenance of his relative, "this matter may as well be understood once for all. I hoped that you had understood me already. I now say that I have had, and can have, but one opinion concerning this war that is being waged to break up the Union, and that opinion can be expressed in two words—it is unnecessary

and suicidal. Being such, I have no part nor lot in the matter, unless to *oppose* it. I have not endeavoured to oppose it, but have suffered you, without remonstrance, to use my property for the benefit of the usurpers in Richmond, as seemed best to you. I shall continue that course, and shall not object to your actions; but, I will go no further. I am neither to be frightened nor coaxed, but shall utterly refuse to do what I believe to be wrong. You are responsible for my property, and I am responsible for myself. I freely accept my share of the responsibility, and am ready to take the consequences of my own action or inaction."

"Do I understand you, then, as endeavouring to assume a position of neutrality?"

"Neutrality!" proudly exclaimed the young man, as the blood mounted to his cheeks. "By no means! You may understand me as taking a position of independence. You say that the South is fighting for her independence. You will see that I can fight for mine, if it is necessary."

"Then, Arthur—"

"Pardon me, uncle. That question is settled, and I have nothing more to say on that unpleasant subject. As you have spoken plainly to me, I now wish to speak plainly to you. Where have you hid my cousin, Carrie Chappelle?"

"She is not hid. She is in Atlanta."

"Yet, through your machinations and manœuvres, I have not been able even to see her. When I have asked you about her, she has been here, she has been there; she has been occupied with this thing, she has been busily engaged with that; anything, so that I might not see her. Now, uncle Madison, that, also, has gone far enough. I am not a child, although I am a ward, nor is Carrie a child. For my part, I am nearly twenty-four years old and have a will of my own. I wish to see my cousin Carrie, and if I cannot see her with your consent, I will use my own means of effecting my object."

Madison Arment was silent for a few moments, holding his head down, as if lost in thought. Then he looked up, and there was a frown upon his face as he addressed his nephew.

"Your wish shall be complied with," he said. "You shall see your cousin, if you will accompany me to Atlanta to-morrow."

"Thank you, uncle. I will do so with pleasure. Shall I direct your room to be made ready for you?"

"You may."

After some unimportant conversation, the relatives separated until supper time, and the subjects that were respectively nearest to their hearts—Southern independence and Carrie Chappelle, were not again mentioned.

CHAPTER III.

Met at Last.

THE next day Arthur Arment drove his uncle, behind a pair of fine horses, to Atlanta, the "Gate City" of the South. It was late in the afternoon when they reached their destination, and they proceeded directly to the furnished house in the city, heretofore mentioned as belonging to the Arment estate.

The house was a plain brick building, unpretending in appearance, but roomy and substantial, and was surrounded by pleasant grounds. A wooden addition was attached to the house, and several large outbuildings were in the rear. It was situated in the southern outskirts of the city, near the fair ground, but not in proximity to any of the lines of intrenchment, which were not then extended so far in that direction. Arthur expressed his wonder as he noticed that the grounds had been so well cared for, and that a negro servant was ready to receive them when they drove up to the door.

"The house has not been unoccupied," answered his uncle. "I have kept the place in good order and repair, at my own expense. That house, Arthur, has been honoured by the presence of General Brag, of General Johnston, of General Hood, and of President Davis himself."

"Were they all flanked out of it, uncle?"

"At present," continued Madison Arment, "it is occupied by your cousin, Carrie Chappelle, and a friend of hers, named Laura Clymer."

"Ah! that is, indeed, an honour, and I feel interested. I hope the house has been properly fumigated since the ambitious Mississippian left it. If the stable is in order, please tell the boy to take care of my team, and let us enter, for I am impatient to see my cousin."

"You will find, Arthur, that she entirely disagrees with you in politics, and you will need to change your course if you desire her to sympathise with you. Carrie's heart, as well as her blood, is Southern, and she is true to the cause of Southern independence."

"So you told me, last evening, and I can believe your word without any repetition. But I do not expect to interfere with her political opinions, and have no fear of quarrelling with her on that score."

The two Arments were ushered through a broad hall into a

large and finely-furnished parlour, where the younger negligently seated himself on a sofa, while the elder nervously and anxiously paced the room.

"This place seems very solitary, uncle," said Arthur. "I have not yet heard or seen any one except the servant who admitted us. Where are its fair occupants?"

"They are up stairs, I suppose, and have not heard of our arrival. Excuse me for a few moments, and I will see that they are notified. You had better be careful not to express your treasonable sentiments before your cousin, for you will find her a true Southerner."

So saying, Madison Arment bowed himself out of the room, with the same frown on his face that it had worn the evening before.

"Uncle Madison seems very particular in informing me about Carrie's politics," muttered Arthur. "I suppose he is afraid that I will try to make a convert of her."

Giving the subject no more thought, the young gentleman rose from his seat, and amused himself with examining the pictures on the walls, and the various articles about the room. It was a long time since he had been inside of that house, and nearly everything seemed new to him.

While he was thus engaged, the door of the parlour opened, and his uncle appeared, followed by two ladies. The first who entered was a beautiful blonde, rather slight in figure, and seeming almost to float in the atmosphere of the room, so lightly and airily she moved. Her hair was a rich brown, neatly braided; her eyes were large and blue, shaded by long lashes, and her cheeks were smooth as alabaster, and of so pure a complexion as to seem almost transparent. The other was a brunette, not beautiful, but with something strangely attractive in her face and expression. She was taller and stronger than the blonde, and there was an appearance of resolution in her figure and in her movements, as well as in her earnest eyes and firmly-cut lips. Both were richly and tastefully dressed.

"Your cousin, Arthur, Carrie," said Madison Arment, as they entered the room. "My nephew, Miss Clymer, Arthur Arment."

The brunette slightly inclined her head to the young man; but the sylph-like blonde advanced and extended her hand to him, with that rich, winning, glowing, unspeakable smile which he so well remembered, and which sent the warm blood gushing to his cheeks and brow.

"I am heartily glad, cousin Arthur," she said, "to meet you again, at last. We have been separated for a long time, and I have wished to see you, but something has always seemed to interpose to prevent a meeting."

"It was no fault of mine, I assure you," answered Arthur; "for I have sought you eagerly and vainly. When you have seemed the nearest to me, you have been the furthest off, for something,

as you say, has always interposed to prevent me from seeing you."

"Perhaps it was fate."

"I suppose it was," replied Arthur, with a meaning glance at his uncle. "It is said that fate generally acts through human agencies."

"We must try to forget that, and must let bygones be bygones. It is a satisfaction to know that we have really met at last. I wish you to know my friend, Laura Clymer."

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Arment before," said the brunette.

"As Miss Clymer is kind enough to remember me," said Arthur, "I may say that I have passed many pleasant hours in her society, and in that of a friend who left us about two years ago."

A deep blush mantled the dark cheeks of Laura Clymer, and she glanced from under her eyelashes at Madison Arment.

That gentleman, who had been sitting uneasily in his chair, anxiously watching the interview between the cousins, and nervously fidgeting with his gloves and handkerchief, now seemed to think that it was time for him to take part in the conversation.

"Carrie," he commenced, "I have told Arthur that if he expected to find in you a sympathizer with his treasonable and anti-Southern opinions, he was greatly mistaken; that you are true to your country, and always ready to devote yourself to the good cause."

"Treasonable opinions!" exclaimed Carrie. "I really hope that Arthur is not tinctured with treason. I should be very sorry to disagree with him, especially upon that subject. I hope, Arthur, that you do not covet the unenviable distinction of being known as a traitor to your country."

"Not I," answered the young man, "and therefore I abjure Jefferson Davis and all his works. But I have not come here to talk politics, and the subject is always distasteful to me. My opinions, whatever they may be, are of no consequence, and could have no more influence in this struggle than the winking of my eye would have in determining the course of the sun."

"As you are disinclined to converse upon the subject, I can only hope for the best. For my part, I can assure you, as uncle Madison has said, that I am true to my country, that I am always ready to devote myself to the good cause, and to die for it, if necessary."

"I admire your spirit, Carrie. The Arment blood can never be lacking in that, whether it takes a right direction or a wrong one."

Madison Arment rose from his seat, and after a few words of farewell, left the house. As he did so, it might have been noticed that the anxious frown had left his countenance, that his troubled, nervous manner had disappeared, and that he again wore his usual mild, courtly, quiet, stately demeanour.

"Of course, cousin Arthur," said Carrie, when her uncle had gone, "you will accept our hospitality to-night. The house is your own, but we are the present proprietors, and the dispensers of such cheer as it affords."

"I shall accept your hospitality with pleasure, cousin. If you had not offered it, I should have concluded to drive back to Oak Grove to-night, for no hotel in Atlanta could hold me."

Laura Clymer, who had taken no part in the conversation, left the room, for the purpose, as she said, of giving directions to the servants, and Arthur Arment found himself alone with his fair cousin. He then felt that she was very beautiful, and wondered whether her heart was as clear and pure as her face was bright and fair. He wondered whether she was as rank a rebel as his uncle had represented. He could not help thinking that, in any event, he was fated to love her. He was half afraid to ask her, fearing that difference of political opinion might create a gulf between them, but he thought the truth must be known some day, and the sooner the better.

"Is it true, cousin Carrie," he asked, "that uncle Madison has correctly represented your opinions concerning this terrible civil war, concerning this attempt to divide and destroy our glorious Union?"

"What do you mean, cousin? I do not know what uncle Madison has told you concerning me and my opinions."

"Are your opinions the same as those of uncle Madison? Are you a follower of Jeff. Davis and his disciples? Do you believe in the disruption of the Union, and in waging a bloody and destructive war for the sake of a shadowy phantom misnamed Southern Rights?"

"You are begging the question, Arthur, and that is not fair. You do not give me a chance to answer you, yes or no. I can tell you that I am a Southerner, by birth and inclination—that I believe the South should have its rights and should fight for them if necessary—that I am true to my country, as a Southern girl ought to be, and that I am ready to devote my life, and all that I have, to the good cause."

"You are a secessionist, then. Well, let it pass, cousin. But your ideas were different when you used to write to me, after my return from college. You agreed with me then, and we both believed that the old flag ought never to be lowered."

"I was younger then than I am now, Arthur, and less experienced. Besides, affairs had not reached the crisis, and we were speaking of abstractions, not of realities. Everything has changed since that time."

"Everything, Cousin Carrie," ejaculated Arthur, in a mournful tone. "Has everything changed?"

"Much has changed, cousin."

As the young man cast a sorrowful glance at the fair face of

his companion, he perceived an expression of severe pain resting upon her lips and clouding her eyes, but he could not interpret it, and felt that he had no right to ask what it meant. He bowed his head in his hands, and remained silent for a few moments, while the hard and painful expression of his cousin changed, as she watched him, to one of pity, that might easily soften into love.

"But your friend," he resumed—"Miss Clymer—does she share your opinions? Does she, also, believe in the righteousness of this rebellion?"

"Laura believes as I do," was the calm reply. "We have no occasion of disagreement."

"And she has changed, as well as the rest. I suppose she has forgotten the man who won her love two years ago—my friend, Seth Staples. Absence and separation must have done their work with regard to him."

"I can assure you that his absence does not grieve her."

"Such is life," sighed Arthur, "and such, I suppose, it always must be. I feel more than ever alone in the world. My life seems still more desolate. A man might as well be dead, as have nothing to live for. I see nothing left for me, except to cast myself into this vortex, and be swept away to nonentity with the rest of the brainless strugglers, who court riot and disorder, and call it glory."

Arthur spoke musingly and meditatively, as if communing with himself; but, if he had looked at her, he might have seen that Carrie Chappelle was touched by his words. She seemed about to speak, when the door opened, and Laura Clymer entered, to announce that supper was ready.

After supper, Arthur and the two ladies remained in the parlour, and occupied themselves with general conversation and music. There was a fine piano in the room, upon which Carrie and Laura accompanied their voices, while Arthur sat buried in a chair, silent, and seemingly lost in thought. He noticed that Carrie's voice was clear and sweet, while that of Laura's was rich and powerful. He also noticed that they sung nothing that might possibly be considered as having a political bearing, and he thought that they were fearful of wounding his feelings, for which kind consideration he was duly grateful.

When bed-time arrived, the ladies bade Arthur good-night, and sought their rooms. He was conducted to his apartment by a negro servant.

CHAPTER IV.

The Apparition.

THE room into which Arthur was ushered was a large bed-chamber, with a high ceiling. It contained only a few articles of furniture, but those were of very rich quality. The principal object was a large canopied bed. The carpet was of velvet pile, very heavy, and noiseless to the tread. The walls were papered, and adorned with a large mirror, and several pictures. There was one door in the room, and two windows, reaching to the floor, that opened upon a balcony, overlooking the garden. Arthur noticed that a window, which had formerly opened out at the rear of the house, had been blocked up, by the building of the wooden addition, and that its place was supplied with paneling.

In all this there was nothing strange, and Arthur, after a glance at the room and its contents, and a mournful glance at his pale and anxious face in the mirror, undressed, extinguished his light, and laid down to rest.

Sleep was slow to visit his eyelids, for his mind was perturbed, and his thoughts were haunted by remembrances of what had been, by dark forebodings of the future, and by vain dreams of what might never be. He had seen his cousin, and had found her as beautiful as a poet's dream. The love that had been half-born within his breast a few years ago, had suddenly sprung into life, full-grown and full-formed, and armed with all its powers to bless or torture, as Minerva sprung from the brain of Jove. But it seemed destined to be a vain, useless, heart-wearying love, for it could not be possible that he and his cousin, holding such opposite opinions upon such a vital question, ever could be joined by a closer tie than that of relationship. This, then, was the reason why his uncle had never brought them together; he had feared that Arthur's peace of mind might be destroyed, and had mercifully preserved him from temptation. Arthur appreciated the supposed kindness of his uncle, and was duly thankful for it; but he felt that he must have met his fate sooner or later, and was not inclined to shirk the issue. For his own part, he was certain that nothing, not even love itself, could change his convictions, and he felt that he was as far from Carrie Chappelle as if they were separated by thousands of miles of ocean.

Thus musing, he fell into a doze, from which he was presently

awakened by the sound of music. It seemed afar off, and fell faintly upon his dull ear, lulling him to sleep again.

"Some military band," he thought, "or a party of midnight serenaders," and again closed his eyes to slumber.

But he was not to be permitted to sleep, for the sound of music arose, seeming to grow nearer and louder, and the strains were so sweet and ravishing, that he involuntarily reclined his head upon his hand to listen.

Soon he was able to distinguish the instruments—a violin, a flute, and a guitar. He heard, also, the sound of vocal music—two female voices, as he thought, but so perfectly blended that they seemed like one, and, at least, one rich in sonorous manly voice.

"Some serenaders in the street," thought Arthur; and yet it seemed strange that there should be ladies among them. He could only consider it a new development of the customs of Atlanta.

The music at first appeared to be a gentle, softly-modulated symphony, with no particular meaning or purpose; but, after a while, it changed, and the dear old melody of "Sweet Home" saluted the charmed ears of the half-awake young man—the clear notes of the violin, the melodious tinkling of the guitar, the rich, swelling tones of the flute, the sweet voices of the female singers, and the deeper intonations of the males, all chiming in so harmoniously, that everything in the room seemed to respond to their delicious vibrations, and Arthur felt himself lapped in Elysium.

"This is strange," dimly mused the young man. "These are surely the sweetest serenaders I ever heard. The ladies will soon answer them, I suppose."

But there was no opening of windows, nor any other response to the music. As the last strains of "Sweet Home" died away, they melted imperceptibly into another symphony, soft and delicate like the first, but decidedly martial in its character. Then arose, from violin, guitar, flute, and melodious voices, the music and words of Captain Cutter's beautiful song, now seldom heard, known as "Many in One:"

"O! many and bright are the stars that appear,
In the flag of our glory unfurled,
And the stripes that are swelling in majesty there,
Like a rainbow adorning the world!"

Arthur listened, as if spell-bound, while the song proceeded, the music growing richer and more glorious as it interpreted the swelling sentences, and when the grand climax was reached, he had become so excited and enthusiastic, that he could hardly restrain himself from leaping out of his bed and going in search of those wonderful serenaders. But he feared that he might break the charm, and resolved to remain quiet.

"This is the strangest thing of all," he mused. "I wonder whether I am really awake. Either I am dreaming, or this is

some strange hallucination of my waking senses. It cannot be possible that such a song should be sung in this city, and at this house, right in the hearing of such rank rebels as my cousin Carrie and Laura Clymer. If that music was real music, they could not help hearing it, and would soon put a stop to the singing of a Union Song like that. I surely can't be awake, but it is a very pleasant dream, and I have no wish for it to end. If I had any matches, I would strike a light and investigate the mystery, but the room is so confoundedly dark, that I would only get myself into trouble."

The young gentleman sat up in his bed, laid down again, pulled his hair, pinched his cheeks, bit his lips, and tried other methods to determine whether he was awake or asleep, but with no satisfactory result. The evidence of his senses told him that he was awake, but his reason told him that he must certainly be dreaming. He gazed around the room, to endeavour to discern the objects which he had noticed on retiring, but the darkness of the night was increased by the heavy curtains that shrouded the windows, and he could distinguish nothing but vague outlines.

As he gazed, a faint, yellowish light began to pervade the room, seeming to insinuate itself through the walls and ceiling. Dim and indistinct at first, it grew more vivid and powerful, until Arthur could plainly perceive the large mirror and the pictures on the walls. Then the light changed to a purplish hue, and a strange, suffocating, but pleasant odour filled the chamber, gradually dulling the senses of the young man, and substituting a feeling of listlessness and languor for the previous excited condition of his nerves.

Satisfied, now, that he must be dreaming, he leaned upon his arm, and freely gave himself up to the ecstatic feeling of the illusion. As he continued to gaze, with half-shut eyes, the large mirror upon the opposite wall gradually lowered, until it touched and rested on the floor, and in its place appeared an American flag, with all the glorious stars and stripes emblazoned upon it, and with its folds falling over the mirror beneath it.

At the same moment, the flute, the guitar, and the violin, which had been again playing a soft and pleasing symphony, blended their tones in the opening to our national anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner," and immediately the sweet female voices, and the rich tones of the males, joined in singing the stirring words of the song. The folds of the banner seemed to wave responsive to the stirring chords, and the young man felt himself moved by an enthusiasm which he was powerless to express. He yielded himself up to the influences of the illusion, and closed his eyes.

But a greater astonishment awaited him; for, when he opened his eyes again, he saw a figure standing before him on the floor, in front of the banner. It was robed entirely in white, and, in form and feature, was the exact likeness of his cousin Carrie. The

resemblance was so perfect, and struck him so suddenly, that he shuddered, fearing that it might be a reality, but not daring to hope so. Its delicate drapery rested upon the floor, but its feet seemed scarcely to touch the soft texture of the carpet.

The music, which had melted to a slow and solemn symphony, now swelled into greater power and richness, as the figure slowly raised its arm, pointed toward the banner, with its brilliant eyes fixed upon Arthur, and spoke as follows :

"Arthur Arment, be true to the flag of your country! You believe in the Union; prove your faith by your works!"

That clear, musical, silvery voice was none other—could be none other—than that of Carrie Chappelle. The illusion was perfect. Arthur felt irresistibly impelled to rise and pursue this beautiful phantom, but he was powerless to move. He could only gaze in wonder, while his eyes dilated, as if they would burst out of his head.

Again he heard the musical voice :

"Arthur Arment, be true to your country and flag. Let nothing lead you astray, but persevere, and true happiness awaits you. Look! its glory is even now over your head!"

The young man involuntarily raised his eyes. As he did so, the light disappeared, and, when he again looked around, the figure of Carrie Chappelle had vanished, and he could distinguish nothing in the darkness.

"Now," he thought, "I know that I have been dreaming, and have just awakened. It needed only that apparition to fully convince me, for it is not possible that Carrie Chappelle would have exhorted me to stand by the Union and the old flag. It was a glorious dream, and I wish it might have been true, but like all pleasant dreams from which one wakes to a sad reality, it leaves an impression of pain."

Having thus settled the matter to his satisfaction, Arthur Arment again laid his head on the pillow, and was soon, aided by the aromatic odour that pervaded the room, lost in a dreamless sleep.

It was quite late in the morning when he was aroused by a negro servant, who knocked at the door, and told him that it was time to dress for breakfast. He immediately rose, astonished and vexed at having slept so late.

While he was dressing, he carefully examined the room and its furniture, and found, as he had expected, that everything was as he had noticed it on retiring. No article of furniture had been moved, and even the mirror, which had been so mysteriously lowered to the floor, hung quietly in its accustomed place. The pungent, suffocating odour, that seemed to have saluted his senses during the night, was not perceptible. Nothing had changed, except his own countenance, which looked pale and careworn, as if he had passed a restless and painful night.

The young gentleman smiled sadly as he surveyed himself in the glass.

"It is wonderful," he said, "how strongly a delusion can take hold upon a healthy and balanced mind. I really thought, during that strange vision of last night, that I was wide awake, and that it was not possible that the evidence of my eyes and ears could deceive me. Still, my reason told me that it could not be real, and I knew that I must be dreaming, as well as I know that I am now awake."

His feeling of certainty was destined to be short-lived, and his philosophy was soon upset; for, on taking up his coat, he discovered a small American flag pinned upon the lappel!

His surprise was so great, that he dropped the coat, and nearly fell upon the floor. When he again took up the garment, and unpinned the badge, he was trembling as if with an ague.

"Am I sure that I am awake now?" he muttered. "Was I dreaming last night, or am I dreaming this morning? If I am awake now, this is certainly real, for I can hold it in my hands, I can feel it, and the pin will prick me. There is nothing unsubstantial about this little flag."

After some more perplexing thought, he came to the conclusion that the mystery was beyond his penetration, and must be left to time and circumstances to unravel. Accordingly, when his nerves had become quiet, he composed his features as well as he could, and went down stairs, resolved to spend the coming night in that room.

At the breakfast-table he was kindly greeted by the ladies, in whose demeanour and appearance he noticed nothing unusual. Carrie Chappelle asked him how he had rested, and he replied that he had seldom passed a night so greatly to his satisfaction, having been favoured with a dream that had given him a great deal of comfort. He could not help feeling, at times, in his vest pocket, to see if the little flag was still there, and was a real, palpable piece of paper.

His desire to pass another night in the room which had furnished his strange experience, was frustrated by the arrival of his uncle, who informed him that it was necessary to proceed immediately to Oak Grove, on important business. Arthur endeavoured to evade compliance with this request, but his uncle was urgent, declaring that the business would admit of no delay, and the young man reluctantly said good-bye to his cousin and her friend, and drove his uncle, sullenly and silently, toward his own house.

CHAPTER V.

Long Looked for, Come at Last.

ARTHUR ARMENT did not reach Oak Grove until evening. He was very moody and uncommunicative during the ride, and, as his uncle seemed quite anxious and meditative, few words passed between them. Arthur kept revolving in his mind the mysterious occurrence of the night before, and often put his hand in his pocket to see if the little flag, that he had so strangely received, was still there, or had melted away like fairy gold. He was satisfied that that part of his vision, at least, was real.

It turned out, greatly to the chagrin of the young man, that the business for which his uncle had hurried him back from Atlanta, was only the arrangement of some trifling matters of detail, connected with the management of the estate. To be sure, he was required to give his decision upon some unimportant questions about which he cared nothing, and to sign a few papers, which, he thought, might as well have been signed at any other time. He could come to no other conclusion, than that his astute uncle wished to shut him out, as much as possible, from the society of his cousin Carrie, and had brought him back from Atlanta because he seemed entirely too willing to remain there. Arthur respected his uncle too highly to complain openly of this conduct, but he sought to penetrate his motives by some quiet questioning.

"I believe," he said, in the course of a desultory conversation, "that Carrie Chappelle's property is very valuable."

"It is a large property," answered his uncle; "not as large as yours, Arthur, but a large one—a very good property."

"Was there not a condition in her father's will, that if she should marry before the age of twenty-one, your guardianship should cease, and that she should have entire control of her property?"

"Yes; there is such a condition, provided she marries with my consent."

"If she was not such a staunch advocate of the Confederacy, or if she should marry a man who is opposed to it, it is possible that her property might not benefit Jefferson Davis and his friends as much as it otherwise would."

"I hardly know what you mean, Arthur," nervously answered the old gentleman. "The case that you present is not a supposable one. Carrie is true to the South, and she would never think of marrying a man who was hostile to the cause of his country, even if I would ever give my consent to such an unnatural alliance. You need not attempt to convert her, for she is proof against treason."

"It is not my business to make proselytes, uncle. I was only asking for information. As she is one of the few relatives that I have, I am naturally interested in her."

Arthur was sure that he had divined the motive of his uncle in separating him from Carrie. Madison Arment evidently feared that his handsome nephew might win the love of his niece, and that the joint importunities of the two might prevail upon him to give his consent to their marriage, so that the property-influence of at least one fine estate would probably be lost to the Confederacy.

In the morning, Arthur drove his uncle to the station at which he was to take the cars for Atlanta, and returned to his solitary home. He was at first inclined to start immediately for the city, and seek an interview with his cousin; but, on second thoughts, he concluded that such a course would betray too much eagerness and impatience, and he determined to wait awhile.

He passed a long and dreary day. He could not remember when the hours had seemed to creep so slowly. He endeavoured to read, but threw book after book aside in disgust. He played with his dog, but soon tired of that sport. He ordered his horse to be saddled and brought to the door for a ride, but immediately changed his mind, and sent it back. He smoked cigars, until he was sick of the scent of tobacco. Do what he could, turn where he would, he could not shut out the thought of his fair cousin Carrie and the mysterious occurrences in his sleeping room. He could not doubt that he had been dreaming, or labouring under a strange optical delusion, but he wished that it might visit him again. He took the miniature flag from his pocket, and pinned it upon the lappel of his coat, as he had found it. He went to the mirror, and thought that it looked well. That part of his experience, at least, was real, tangible, indubitable. Not satisfied with this evidence, he called in his body-servant, and gave him some trifling directions. The black boy noticed the flag on his master's coat, and started.

"Oh, mass'r Arthur!" he exclaimed, "whar'd you git dat?"

"I found it, Henry. Are you afraid of it?"

"No, sah; not much, I s'pect."

The flag was real, then, for other eyes besides his own had seen it, and he had evidence on which he could rely with certainty. He could only conjecture that the ladies had wished to taunt him with his Unionism, and had fastened the flag to his coat as a freak. That could have nothing to do with his remarkable vision.

Towards evening, the young gentleman was again seated by his parlour window, smoking a cigar, and communing with his discontented thoughts, when he perceived four Confederate horsemen, with an officer at their head, riding down the road that led by the house, from the direction of Atlanta. He watched them, and saw them stop in front of the house. The officer and two of the men

dismounted, and walked up to the front door, while the others held their horses.

The bell rung, and in a few minutes a servant entered the room, and informed his master that a gentleman wished to see him.

"Show him in," said Arthur, and the Confederate officer made his appearance, while the two soldiers stood at the door of the parlour.

"I have an unpleasant duty to perform, Mr. Arment," said the officer, quite politely. "I have an order for your arrest, signed by the Provost-Marshal-General of the Army of Tennessee."

"You surprise me," said Arthur, calmly puffing his cigar. "There must be some mistake about the matter, for I don't know what authority the State of Tennessee has to order the arrest of a citizen of Georgia."

"You misapprehend me, sir—wilfully, I suppose. I did not speak of the State of Tennessee, but of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, which is now in the vicinity of Atlanta"

"Ah! pardon me, for the mistake was a natural one. What is the Army of Tennessee doing down here in Georgia?"

"It has fallen back before the enemy, to protect the city of Atlanta."

"Just as it protected Chatanooga, I suppose. I am glad to hear that it has successfully flanked its way so far. I hope the men are not wearied by their long march. This order, you say, is signed by an officer of the Confederate army. I do not recognise any such authority."

"Whether you recognise it or not, you will have to submit to it," said the officer, who was really provoked by the coolness of the young gentleman.

"I suppose so," answered Arthur, throwing his cigar out of the window.

The threatened and long-expected arrest had come at last. He had spoken and thought of such a possibility very lightly, but now it was a reality, and a very unwelcome one, for it occurred just at a time when he desired his liberty. It would be very irksome, he thought, to be confined, and restrained of his freedom of action, when he was so anxious to see his cousin again, and to sleep once more in the room where he had passed the previous night. He mentally consigned the officer and his order to a better place than Atlanta.

"If you will excuse me for a moment," he said, "I will step up to my room and get a few articles that I need, and will be ready in a few minutes."

"Certainly, Mr. Arment, if you will give me your word that you will come down here again."

"I will return directly, upon my honour."

The young gentleman rose, and left the parlour. He had two loaded revolvers in his room, and it was his intention to bring

down these weapons, refuse to submit to the arrest, and sell his life as dearly as possible, if he could not beat off the officer and his men. There was a strong probability that the rich carpets of the Arment mansion would be stained by Southern blood.

As he passed out of the room, his hand was touched by a soldier who stood at the door—a heavily bearded man with a stolid countenance—and he felt a paper thrust into it. His hand mechanically closed upon the scrap, and he passed on, and walked up-stairs, as if there had been no interruption.

“When he reached his room, he opened the paper, and, to his surprise, read as follows:

“Submit quietly to the arrest. The flag that was pinned upon your coat will protect you. Be true to the Union, and fear nothing.
“A FRIEND.”

Here was a new development. The soldier who had handed him the paper must be a friend, whether in disguise or not. But how could he know anything of the flag that Arthur had found pinned upon his coat? After he had shown it to Henry, he had replaced it within his vest pocket, and no eyes but his own had seen it. This circumstance increased the mystery, and, gave it a new character. The young man grew more anxious to penetrate it, and resolved that he would follow his fate, in whatever direction it might lead him.

He took out his pistols, examined them, and then, with a shake of his head, put them back in their drawer. He changed some of his clothes, brushed his hair, and walked down to the parlour. Thus it happened that the Arment carpets were not stained.

“I am ready, captain,” said Arthur, with a pleasant smile. “As soon as my horse is brought up, we will start, if you wish.”

He ordered some refreshments for the soldiers, and entered into a good-humoured conversation with the officer, until his horse was brought to the door. The Confederate was agreeably surprised at the change in the demeanour of his prisoner, and congratulated himself that his unpleasant duty was likely to be so pleasantly performed.

“I suppose we will ride to Atlanta,” suggested Arthur.

“Yes, sir. It is a long ride, but we will have a moon, and I trust that you will not be inconvenienced by the journey.”

“Not at all. It is a pleasant ride, and I need exercise. I was intending to go to the city to-morrow. I suppose there is a little attempt at strategy, in conveying me through the country by night, but I assure you that it is entirely unnecessary.”

“I know nothing about the strategy,” replied the officer. “I hope, however, that your restraint will be a brief one, for I have been agreeably surprised in you. I was given to understand that I should find you an obstinate man, and, probably, a desperate one.”

"I have been belied," laughed Arthur. "I assure you that I am a very mild-mannered and peaceable person, if I am not pushed too hard."

When Arthur's horse was brought to the door, he mounted, in company with the officer and his men, and they trotted up the road together, in the direction of Atlanta.

CHAPTER VI.

Who Were They?

As the party started off, young Arment was by the side of the officer, with two soldiers riding in front, and two in their rear. Arthur had looked closely at the man who had handed him the note, before leaving the house, and he turned in his saddle and glanced back at him several times as he rode. The soldier, however, gave not the slightest sign of recognition, nor was there the least change in his heavily-bearded, stolid, inexpressive countenance. Arthur began to wonder whether he had actually received the note, and whether that circumstance was not as unreal as his vision.

It was after sunset when they commenced their journey; but the moon soon rose, and its rays, struggling through the scattered clouds, enabled them to see quite distinctly. When they had travelled about ten miles, they reached a dry and sandy upland, where the road ran through a thick grove of pines, mingled with a stunted undergrowth.

They had come to the densest part of the grove, where the road made a sharp turn to the right, when there was a sudden rush from among the pines, and a number of armed men, some of whom were mounted, sprung out upon the party. A few shots were fired, and there was a brief struggle, accompanied by oaths and cries, at the conclusion of which the Confederate officer and his escort were all driven off, or secured as prisoners. The onset was so sudden, and the attacking force was so overwhelming that little resistance was made.

Arthur Arment did not see the conclusion of the little conflict. His horse, frightened by the flash and report of a pistol fired near

its head, suddenly reared up, throwing its rider to the ground, and falling upon him. Arthur felt a stunning shock, and all consciousness left him.

When he came to his senses, he was lying on a soft bed, in a darkened room. He tried to raise himself, to look around and ascertain where he was, but found himself so weak and sore in body, that he was obliged to desist from the attempt, and to be content with surveying the situation from the position in which he found himself.

The room was a small one, furnished neatly and comfortably, but not in a costly manner. There was but one window, which was darkened by heavy curtains, admitting only a few faint rays of sunshine. A chair and a small table were near the bed, and on the latter were a few bottles, a cup and saucer, and a Bible. The bed was overhung by dark curtains, shutting out his view, except at one side. There was a peculiar air of neatness about the room and its appurtenances, and the arrangement of everything spoke to Arthur's fastidious eyes of the delicate and tasteful hand of woman.

The young gentleman was bewildered. He wondered where he was, and his anxiety to know made him nervous. He again essayed to rise, and, in making the effort, reached out his hand and knocked over the chair by the bedside, which fell on the floor with something of a crash.

Directly he heard the patter of gaitered feet on the stairs, and a rustling of muslin at the door, which opened, and admitted a fresh-faced, cheery, matronly-like woman, who immediately closed the door behind her. She was neatly dressed, wore a widow's cap, and had a pleasant smile, which went right to Arthur's heart, and made him feel at home.

"So you are awake, sir," she said, in a clear and chirping voice, as she tripped to the bedside. "Have you been trying to get up? You shouldn't exert yourself, sir, for you are very weak. Well, I declare! if you haven't turned over a chair! That is what made the racket. It is lucky that you didn't upset the table, for you would have spilt all those excellent medicines that you don't need at all."

"Will you have the kindness to take a seat, madam, and tell me where I am?"

"You are in my house, to be sure," answered the little woman, as she seated herself, and smiled sunnily at the invalid.

"And who are you, if it is not too rude a question?"

"I am Mrs. Bennett, and your nurse at present."

"How long have I been here?"

"Only since last night. You were brought here by some men, who said they were your friends, and that you had been injured by a fall from your horse. You were insensible when you were brought in, and the doctor said that he feared you had suffered a

concussion of the brain. When you awoke, you were slightly delirious, talking about flags and dreams, and such nonsense, and he gave you, as he said, a powerful opiate. You went to sleep, and have just woke up, I suppose."

"Am I in Atlanta?"

"No, indeed, sir. Your friends who brought you here would not have taken you to Atlanta."

"Who were they, and where are they now?"

"They are strangers to me, sir, and I have not seen them since. But you are talking too much. The doctor said that if you were kept quiet, you would soon be well."

"Am I badly hurt?"

"No, sir. At least you are in no danger. You have received a severe shock, and have been bruised, but you will soon be well, if you will be content to keep quiet. You must reconcile yourself to lying still, and I will go and bring your breakfast—or dinner, for it is past noon."

So saying, the good little lady bustled out of the room, and soon returned with some tempting and substantial food, of which the young gentleman ate heartily. She then brought him a book to read, placed a bell on the table, that he might ring if he wished anything, cautioned him not to knock over any more of her chairs, and went to attend to her household duties.

Arthur did not read much. He had the book open, and his eyes mechanically followed the words through the pages, but the sense of sight conveyed nothing to his brain, and when he had finished a chapter, he could not have told what he had been reading about. The most thrilling romance, the most important and exciting news, would have had no interest for him, for his mind was entirely engrossed by one subject.

Who were those mysterious friends who had aided him, and had rescued him from his captors? Why had they done so, and why had they not revealed themselves to him? The soldier who had given him the note must have been in league with them, for his promise had been fulfilled, and the little flag had proved a protection from Confederate capture, at least. Arthur bitterly deplored the accident which had deprived him of consciousness at the time of the attack. If that had not happened, he might have known who and what they were, and might have gained a clue to the mysterious circumstances that had lately surrounded him. But the opportunity had been lost, and he could only wonder and wait. He resolved that he would go to Atlanta, as soon as he was able to rise from his bed, in spite of the danger of arrest, and would pass another night in the chamber in which he had had the strange vision, for he saw no other chance of learning anything about the mystery of the flag.

The time passed in these fruitless musings, while the cheery, brisk little Mrs. Bennett brought his dinner, or rather supper, and

sat down by the bedside with her sewing. An atmosphere of warmth and brightness seemed to enter the room with her, which soon drove away the clouds that had gathered about his brain, and caused him to forget his perplexities. Her kind, merry and witty conversation was very entertaining to him, but she professed inability to enlighten him upon his situation, or to describe, with any degree of accuracy, the persons who had brought him to the house. She sat with him until after nine o'clock, when she bade him good-night, wishing him pleasant dreams.

When she had gone, Arthur again fell into a fit of musing, in the course of which he took his little flag from the pocket of his vest, that was laid in a chair near the bed, examined it carefully, handled it, and laid it on the table by his side. There was nothing unusual about it, nor anything extraordinary. There was but one question—how did it happen to be pinned on his coat, and what did that Confederate soldier know about it. The wonder was:

“Not that 'twas any thing rich or rare,
But how the mischief it got there.”

Mrs. Bennett had given him a composing draught before she left him, under the influence of which he soon became drowsy. Perceiving that he would not be able to keep awake much longer, he extinguished his light, and laid his head on the soft pillow, to let sleep come when it chose.

He knew not how long he had slept, when he was awakened by a strain of music. Arthur had not an educated ear for music, but it seemed to him that he heard the same low and gentle symphony that had first greeted his ears at the house in Atlanta. There was a change, however, in the instruments; there was a violin and a guitar, but no flute. The music was at first soft and distant, but gradually grew nearer and louder, until it seemed to be beneath his window, in an adjoining room, over his head, and all around him. His senses, partially deadened by the opiate that he had taken, were unable to locate it.

As the symphony ended, it melted into the opening to a ballad, as at the Atlanta house, and this time he was favoured with the sweet and touching song of “Annie Laurie.” There was a difference in the voices, as well as in the instruments, for he could distinguish only two voices, one clear and silvery, the other rich and deep.

“There can be no doubt now,” thought the young gentleman, “that I *am* dreaming, and that I was dreaming at Atlanta. Those mysterious serenaders would not have followed me here, and if they had, I should soon hear Mrs. Bennett bustling about. But all in the house is as still as death, and I am surely asleep. Yet the flag was not dreamy or uncertain.”

At the close of the ballad, which seemed to faint and die away,

like the expiring breath of an evening breeze, the music suddenly changed to the stirring air, "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." Nearer and clearer seemed the tones of the instruments, and louder and fuller the sweet and rich notes of the singers. Arthur was entranced while he listened, for it had been a long time since he had heard the dear old song, and now it was sung by voices which appeared to thrill with the patriotic sentiments it invoked, which interpreted the music with the spirit and the understanding also.

"Really," he thought, "I have a strange experience in dreams. If the country was at peace, and there was any literature at the South, I would write an account of my visions for some periodical. I have no doubt that it would create quite a sensation. I suppose it is natural to conclude that I have been so excited by the dream I had at Atlanta, and my mind has been so constantly occupied by it, that a similar vision has visited me to-night. Yet, it is strange that I can reason about it, and decide upon my condition so calmly. My brain must be more impressionable than I had supposed it to be. I wonder what is to come next."

His mental question was soon answered. There was a rustling at his right hand, the curtain of his bed was slowly raised, and a brilliant flash of light fell upon the wall, as if thrown from the other side of the room, revealing an American flag, such as he had seen at Atlanta! It was almost within reach, and he stretched out his arm to touch it, when the curtain fell, and the light vanished, leaving only a dim and mellow lustre, which enabled him to see, though indistinctly, the various objects within range of his vision.

As he looked around, he perceived, standing near the foot of the bed, a female figure, precisely like that which had appeared to him in his vision at Atlanta. It had the form and countenance of his cousin, Carrie, etherealized, and dimly visible in the uncertain light. It raised its arms, pointing upward, while a soft strain of music came from the violin, and spoke in a low, clear, silvery voice as follows:

"Arthur Arment, you believe in the Union; prove your faith by your works. Have no fear, but do what you know to be your duty, and happiness awaits you!"

As the figure ceased speaking, it moved noiselessly to the table, took up the little flag that lay by the extinguished lamp, kissed it, and replaced it on the table.

Just then a rustling of the curtain again attracted Arthur's attention, and he hastily turned his eyes in that direction. When he once more looked around, the phantom had disappeared, and the room was dark.

"Very fine!" thought the young gentleman, as he closed his eyes. "This is simply a repetition of my previous dream, with some slight variations. Still, I wish I had not awakened quite so soon."

Being too drowsy to reason any more upon the matter, he fell asleep, and did not awake again until the sun was shining in between the curtains of his window.

CHAPTER VII.

A Ring of the True Metal

MRS. BENNETT soon made her appearance, with her usual bright smile and cheerful voice, and asked her patient how he felt.

"Much better," was the answer. "You wished me pleasant dreams, and I have had them. They have done me much good."

"A warm breakfast will do you more good," said the merry little woman. "I will bring it in to you in a few moments."

She drew aside one of the window curtains, and raised the window, letting in the fresh morning air and the sweet breath of flowers that were clustered about the blind, and then smiled her way out of the room, leaving a double dose of sunshine behind her.

When she had gone, Arthur bethought himself of the diminutive flag that he had left on the table before extinguishing the light, the flag that the phantom had kissed in his dreams. He was sure that Mrs. Bennett had not noticed it, or she would have spoken about it. He did not wish her to see it, for it seemed, somehow, sacred to him, and he thought that even her pure and mild eyes would profane it.

He reached out his hand to get the flag and replace it in his vest-pocket, when he was astonished to feel and see a ring resting upon it. First putting the flag carefully away, he took the ring and examined it.

It was a plain, gold ring, set with a turquoise, on which some characters were engraved. He held it to the light, and endeavoured to decipher them, but was unable to do so. There was a newspaper lying on the table, from which he tore a strip of the white margin, folded it in several thicknesses, placed it upon the Bible, and pressed the ring against it until he obtained an impression. The inscription, in delicate Roman text, was simply the word:

"Union."

Hearing Mrs. Bennett at the door, he hastily slipped the ring on his finger, throwing the paper on the floor.

As she brought in his breakfast, and placed it on the table, the little woman noticed that he appeared abstracted and troubled, and kindly asked him what was the matter.

"Nothing," answered Arthur. "I was only thinking about a singular dream that I had last night. Mrs. Bennett, have you lost a ring?"

"No, sir. I have only my wedding-ring, which is still on my hand."

"Have you not left a ring in this room by mistake—a plain gold ring, with a turquoise set?"

"No, Mr. Arment. I have not seen such a ring."

"Are there any other ladies residing in the house?"

"No, sir; there is no one here but myself and two negro servants. Why do you ask?"

"I thought that I might possibly explain the dream that I had last night. Dreams sometimes prove true, you know. I dreamed that I had found such a ring on this table."

"Law, Mr. Arment, the shock that your head received must have troubled your brain. I have no doubt that you have dreamed all sorts of queer things. You must eat your breakfast, and then you will feel better, and forget these fancies."

The young gentleman did not neglect this advice, but made a hearty meal, which seemed to brace him up. He was silent and meditative, however, so much so that Mrs. Bennett was quite anxious about him. When he had finished, he sat up in the bed, and addressed her, abruptly:

"Mrs. Bennett, was my horse brought here with me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was he hurt by the fall?"

"He was lamed a little, but Jonas says that he doesn't feel it now."

"If you will have the kindness to tell Jonas to saddle him, I will get up, for I must go to Atlanta to-day."

"Oh, Mr. Arment, you must not think of such a thing! You are too weak to ride, and, besides, your friends would be greatly troubled if you should go to Atlanta, for they said that danger awaited you there."

"How do I know that they were my friends? I do not even know who they were."

"If they had not been your friends, they would not have brought you here."

"That is true, Mrs. Bennett. They must have been friends, indeed, to take me to such a pleasant place. How far is it to Atlanta?"

"About twelve miles."

"I can easily ride that distance. I assure you that I feel quite

well and strong. It is useless to oppose me, for I am determined to go."

As Arthur insisted upon getting up, Mrs. Bennett at last consented that he should do so, but prevailed upon him not to mount his horse until he had had his dinner. After he had dressed, she arranged his room, brought in her sewing, and did not let him get out of her sight until they were called to dinner.

As soon as the young gentleman had finished his dinner, he had his horse brought to the door, mounted, bade Mrs. Bennett good-by, with many thanks for her kindness, and rode off down the lane toward the Atlanta road.

When he was out of sight of the house, he took the little flag from his pocket, examined it, kissed it, and replaced it. He took the turquoise ring from his finger, held it up to the light, kissed it, and replaced that also. He now felt himself doubly bound to the Union, for he carried its flag, and wore its ring.

Notwithstanding his assurance to Mrs. Bennett, he was still quite weak and sore when he left her house, and was unable to ride fast. Accordingly, he allowed his horse to walk the greater part of the distance, and it was near the close of the afternoon when he arrived at the outskirts of Atlanta.

He rode directly to the house that was occupied by his cousin, called a negro servant to take charge of his horse, and entered the door without ringing.

He found his cousin Carrie sitting alone in the parlour. She appeared greatly surprised to see him, for she dropped the book that she had been reading, and rose in confusion, a deep blush changing the ivory of her complexion to ruby.

"I hope I haven't frightened you, Cousin," said Arthur. "You seem to be startled."

"Not at all," answered Carrie, as she regained her composure. "You came so unexpectedly, and you looked so pale and worn, that I feared you were sick."

"I have had a fall from my horse, and the shock made me very weak," answered Arthur, as he seated himself in an easy-chair.

"How did it happen?"

"Nero was frightened, and he reared up and fell over with me. But I am nearly well now, and if you will allow me to rest here to-night, I will be myself again in the morning."

"Certainly, Arthur, and we will do all we can for you."

"Where is your friend, Miss Clymer?"

"She has gone to make a visit. I am not sure whether she will return to-night, or not."

"Have you seen uncle Madison lately?"

"He was here this morning, in company with some officers."

"H-m-m, it has been a fine day."

"Very pleasant."

Arthur Arment had exhausted his battery of small talk, or it

had been silenced by the bright eyes of Carrie Chappelle. He looked at her, and thought that she was wondrously beautiful, so like the ethereal vision that had twice visited him in his dreams ! All the love that he had been striving so hard to repress, and that he had succeeded so poorly in repressing, gushed up in his heart at once. He leaned forward, gazed earnestly at her, as if he would send his whole soul out through his eyes, and spoke in deep and ardent tones :

"Cousin Carrie, I have something to tell you ; something that concerns me very nearly ; something upon which, as it seems to me, the happiness of my life rests ; and yet, I am afraid to tell it, for I feel certain that it will not be received as I wish it might, and that my hopes, if I really have any, will be dashed to the ground."

He had bowed his head as he spoke, and did not perceive the deep blush that suffused his cousin's cheeks as she answered :

"What is it, Arthur ? I am ready to listen to anything you have to say."

"Carrie," he said, looking up quickly, "I love you. I have always loved you. I loved you when you were a child, and now, when you are grown up, and have become a woman, I love you with all the warmth and strength of my man's heart. I have always felt nearer to you than to any other earthly being, and have believed that you were and must be my fate. I have always hoped that you might return my love, and have thought so—until now—until I saw you, a few days ago. Carrie, could you give me any love in return for mine?"

She had picked up the book she had dropped, and her head was bent over it, and he could not see her eyes, they were so shaded by the long lashes.

"Per-haps—I might," she answered, in a low and hesitating voice.

"You might ! I thank you for the possibility. It is worth a world to me. What can I do, Carrie, to gain your love, or, rather, to regain it, for I know that it was once mine ? Tell me. I lay myself and all that I have at your feet. You have only to command me, to mould me as you please, to tell me what I shall do, what I shall be."

"Uncle Madison tells me that you are a traitor to the South ; that you uphold the Yankee Government ; that you are indisposed to fight or do anything to preserve the rights of the South. You have yourself admitted that this is so, and you cannot fail to perceive that there is a barrier between us. I confess that I might have loved you ; but such feelings must be crushed, and I will crush them, for I will not love a man who is false to his country."

"What would you have me do, Carrie ? Would you have me act and live a lie ? Would you have me labour for a cause, or die for a cause, in which my heart could not be ? Would you have

me recreant to my sense of duty and of honour? Would you have me do what I believe to be wrong, and say what I feel to be untrue?"

"No, Arthur; I would have you do nothing of the kind. I know that it is not easy for an Arment to lie, and I would not ask of you an untruth, either spoken or acted. If your convictions are such as uncle Madison has said, I suppose you cannot do otherwise than cling to them; but you must not blame me if I say that they put a barrier between us; that I can have no love—that I must have none—for a man who is a traitor to his country."

Arthur Arment bowed his head in his hands, and was silent. There was a sorrowful, compassionate look on the fair countenance of Carrie Chappelle, and tears stole out from under her eyelids, but she quickly wiped them away.

"And then, Arthur," she continued, in feeble, timid tones, "see what a half-hearted, useless life you lead. When I embrace a cause, I do it with my whole soul, and would die for it; but you would do nothing. If I believed as you do, I would prove my faith by my works."

"Just what you said last night!" exclaimed the young man, so startled that he did not know what he was saying.

Carrie rose from her seat, with an indignant flush upon her cheek, and a haughty glance at her cousin.

"Arthur Arment! what do you mean? Have you come here to insult me?"

"Pardon me, Carrie, and be seated. I was speaking of a wonderful dream that came to me. There is another Carrie Chappelle, your spirit, your shadow, or your double—with all the beauty of your face, with your wondrous eyes, with your graceful figure, with your airy lightness of tread, with your sweet and musical voice. She comes to me in my dreams, and blesses me in my sleep. She appeared to me a few nights ago, when I slept in this house. Then she told me to be true to the Union, and to prove my faith by my works, and she left me this miniature representation of our glorious old flag"—taking the cherished little emblem from his pocket, and holding it up before her eyes.

"I am surprised at you, Arthur," mournfully answered his cousin. "I am sorry for you. The fall from your horse must have injured your brain, or you have been pondering this unpleasant subject until you have become a little delirious."

"Perhaps I am, Carrie. Perhaps I am. But that flag is real, thank God! Last night she appeared to me again, when I was helpless by reason of my injury. She came with heavenly music, and in a heavenly light, and again she bade me be true to the Union, and to prove my faith by my works, and she left me this ring."

He held the ring up to the light, and placed it in her hand.

"It is a pretty ring," said Carrie. "What is this inscription?"

"The word is *Union*—the Union to which she told me to be true. I can love *her*, cousin Carrie. I can love that angel of my dreams, and can feel that she loves me, though you may be cold and distant. I will be true to her, to the old flag that she loves, to the Union that she venerates; and, God helping me, I will prove my faith by works. From this hour—"

"Hark!" interrupted Carrie. "You must excuse me, Arthur I hear Laura at the door."

CHAPTER VIII.

A Hard Question Decided.

ARTHUR ARMENT picked up the ring that his cousin had dropped, and replaced it on his finger. His impetuosity had subsided, and he felt sorry that he had spoken as he had. He was sorry that he had told Carrie of his dreams, of his flag, and of his ring. Yet he had felt every word that he had said, and thought that she might as well know that he had some consolation besides mortal love. He endeavoured to compose his countenance, and to put on his holiday smile; for, although he was certain that Carrie would repeat to her friend every word he had said, yet, the conventionalities of life demanded that the undercurrent of passion should not appear upon the surface.

As Carrie Chappelle opened the front door, he heard Laura Clymer's voice, and also the deep, rich voice of a man, which so startled him that he nearly jumped out of his seat. He did not hear it again, however, and calmed his agitation, so that he greeted Laura Clymer with every politeness when she entered the room. She was alone, and he asked her where she had left his cousin.

"She has gone to her room," was the reply. "She said that she was not well, and sent me here to entertain you."

"I am very grateful for her kindness. I don't wish to be inquisitive, Miss Clymer, but did not a gentleman enter the house with you?"

"Yes, sir. A friend accompanied me to the door, and left me there. He is a relation."

"I mentioned the circumstance because I heard his voice, and

it sounded wonderfully like that of an old friend of mine, so much so that I was startled. It sounded like the voice of Seth Staples."

A slight blush tinged the cheeks of the brunette, but she did not show any other sign of emotion.

"You have strange fancies, Mr. Arment," she said. "Carrie told me that you were in a very imaginative mood this evening."

"Perhaps I am; but it seems a strange coincidence to me, like some others that I have noticed lately."

Laura Clymer found it a difficult task to entertain her visitor, who was very taciturn and abstracted, and it was not long before both relapsed into silence, and remained speechless until the supper bell reminded them that their mouths were made for something else besides talking.

Arthur Arment did not again see his cousin alone that night, and the presence of Laura Clymer operated as a bar to anything like serious conversation between them. As they were about retiring, however, Carrie gave him her hand, and said to him :

"Arthur, if you can change your course, and be as I am, you may tell me so in the morning. If not, I trust that you will not again mention the subject which you introduced this evening."

Arthur bowed in silence. He hoped to receive a visit that night from the Carrie Chappelle of his dreams.

He was shown to the same chamber which he had occupied on the previous night. He examined it before he laid down, more carefully than he had on the former occasion, but he perceived nothing unusual, nothing suspicious about the walls or the furniture. He drew a small table to the bedside, on which he placed his little flag and some matches. He kissed his ring, and laid his head on the pillow.

Although his heart was troubled, he had not long to wait for sleep, for he still was weak, sore, and very weary. He awoke at the first dawn of daybreak, with a feeling of bitter disappointment, for his sleep had been as far as he knew, entirely dreamless. His guardian angel had forgotten or neglected him. She had not visited him during the night. He had gained no clue to the solution of the mystery of the flag and the ring, and he felt really forlorn.

Then he sighed and trembled as he thought of the responsibility that rested upon him that morning, of the necessity of making a decision that must control his fate as regarded his love. He was certain that Carrie had loved him once, and he believed that she loved him still; but he felt sure that she would, as she had said she would do, crush out all love for a man who differed from her on the vital questions of the rebellion.

His choice was narrowed down, so that the decision of the question was a simple one; he was to decide for treason, love, and Carrie Chappelle, or for loyalty, persecution, and loneliness. The material and personal advantages were all on one side, as it seemed,

and it must be confessed that Arthur Arment hesitated. It was not to be wondered at, that the young gentleman, who had been reared in luxury and in the gratification of every desire, should hesitate, before throwing away his love and his liberty, for an unsubstantial idea of loyalty. If his vision had again visited him, if the sweet voice of the Carrie of his dreams had again counselled and admonished him, he would have been strengthened to do what he believed to be his duty; but he felt very weak and lonely that morning.

As he groaned and writhed in the agony of his doubt, his eyes fell on the little flag that lay on his table, and he thought of the words of the vision: "Do what you know to be your duty, and happiness awaits you." He pressed the emblem to his heart; he kissed the blue stone of his ring; he prayed, for a few moments, as he had not prayed for years; and then he rose from his bed, with a lighter heart and a renewed resolution.

When he went down into the parlour, Carrie Chappelle was standing by the window. She turned and advanced to meet him, as if expecting him to speak. His heart almost failed him, as he gazed upon her beauty, and thought how vainly he was throwing away such a treasure; but he smiled sadly as he spoke:

"I have decided, cousin, to do what I know to be my duty. I believe in the Union, and hope to prove my faith by my works."

"You know the consequence," was the calm reply.

"I do, to my sorrow, and I shall endeavour to be obedient to your wishes."

Arthur thought that he perceived a smile of triumph in the countenance of the fair girl, as she turned and looked out of the window again. If there was such a smile, it passed away as rapidly as the shadow cast by a flying cloud, and she said nothing.

It was a dull day for Arthur. Nothing more was said about love, and political questions were interdicted by common consent. It was a grievous thing to be near the object of his love, to drink in her beauty with thirsty eyes, to listen to the music of her voice, and yet be unable to say a word to her of the passion that was burning his heart; but he felt of his flag, he looked at his ring, he thought of his bright visions of the night, and he tried to bear it manfully.

As the shadows of evening closed in, he grew weary of his task. The restraint had become intolerable to him, and he determined to take a walk, hoping to drive away his oppressive melancholy. Accordingly, he took his hat, and sallied out into the street, saying that he would soon return.

He did not wish to go into the thickly-inhabited or business part of the town, fearing that he might be recognised and arrested, a contingency that would be, to say the least, unpleasant. Therefore he walked toward the Fair Ground, and then went in a northeasterly direction, until he was near one of the inner lines of intrenchment. There were no soldiers on duty at that part of the

works, and he continued his course in an easterly direction, intending to visit the country by moonlight, when he saw a female figure walking in a cross street, a short distance ahead of him.

As he casually glanced at the figure, it struck him that it was that of Carrie Chappelle. He looked more closely, and became satisfied. The form, the air, the gait, were certainly those of his cousin; but what, in the name of wonder, and of maidenly delicacy, could she be doing in that suburb, at that time of night?

The young gentleman changed his course, and followed her at a little distance. Soon she came to a neighbourhood where the houses were few and small, and where the ground was rough and broken. She stopped near a house, close to which ran a line of intrenchments, and a man came out from the shadow of the wall, with whom she entered into a conversation.

Drawing his slouched hat over his face, Arthur walked rapidly on, until he had passed them. He could not distinguish the features of the man, but he was sure that the woman was his cousin Carrie. As he passed them, he heard the words "love," and "our union."

"Arthur thought that he had gained a new light. "It is no wonder," he muttered, "that she can cast me off so easily and so coolly, when she already has a lover, and can go so far as to meet him at night, and speak openly of their love and their union. But I do not understand how it is possible for a Chappelle, with the blood of the Arments in her veins, to descend to such a meeting as this, and in such a neighbourhood. I will watch to see where she goes, and will follow her, to upbraid her for such unmaidenly conduct."

Carrie's conversation was soon concluded. The man disappeared behind the house, and she turned, and walked rapidly towards the settled part of the city. As this was not the direction that Arthur had expected her to take, he was obliged to quicken his steps. He soon caught sight of her, but only to lose it again, for she vanished at the corner of a street. He changed his pace to a run, and again had a glimpse of her, after passing several blocks, as she was crossing a street.

He was now more than ever anxious to see and speak with her, and hastened his steps, thinking that he would soon overtake her. But, to his surprise and dismay, his path was blocked by a Confederate soldier, who presented his bayonet, and demanded his pass.

"What do you mean?" angrily demanded Arthur.

"Your pass—you must show me your pass."

"I have nothing of the kind. Out of my way, for I am in a hurry."

"If you have no pass, you must go with me."

"Out of my way, you scoundrel! I will not be stopped!"

Suddenly rushing upon the soldier, the young gentleman seized

him by the collar, and flung him, musket and all, into the street. Then he ran on after the flitting female figure.

He had not gone far, when he was stopped by two soldiers, who blocked his way as the first had done, and demanded his pass. Greatly to his disgust, he was obliged to halt and parley with them, and while he was thus detained, the soldier whom he had discomfited came up and explained the manner in which he had been treated, and Arthur Arment was informed that he was a prisoner.

Remonstrance was useless, resistance would have been in vain, and the young gentleman was reluctantly compelled to march off with his captors to a guardhouse, where he was thrust into a cell, and told that his case would be attended to in the morning.

The cell was dirty and unpleasant, and he was a prisoner, with the prospect of a long confinement when his name should become known; but that was not what troubled him. He was thinking of his cousin. He was deeply pained to know that that pure and beautiful girl, as he had always considered her, could descend so low as to hold a clandestine meeting, at night, in an unfrequented part of the town. He thought that she must have an overpowering love for the man she had met. He was certain that she did love him, for he had heard them speak of their love and their union. He regretted that he had been apprehended, when he could have overtaken her so soon after the occurrence, and he registered a vow that he would go to her as soon as he got out of prison (if he should get out), would tell her that he had witnessed her unlady-like conduct, would bitterly bid her farewell, and would then do something—he knew not what—for the cause of the Union. If he should lose his useless life, it would not matter.

Having formed this righteous resolve, he lay down on the floor of his cell, and tried to sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

Unseen Spirits.

ARTHUR ARMENT, as may be supposed, passed a very unpleasant night. He was still quite sore, from the effects of his accident.

And the pains were not at all diminished by the rough boards on which he had been obliged to sleep. He rose from his uneasy couch in the morning, feeling very sulky and obstinate, a fit subject for the tender mercies of a military despot.

He had been told that his case should be attended to in the morning, and he paced his cell impatiently, waiting for his time to come. It was not until ten o'clock, however, that a guard arrived to carry him to the office of the Provost-Marshal. He had no desire to appear before that official in his unwashed and unkempt condition, and bribed the guard to allow him to stop at a barber's shop, and attend to his outward appearance. When he came out of the shop, he again looked and felt like a gentleman, and was ready to meet a Provost-Marshal or any other officer.

When he reached the office, his case was immediately investigated. Charges were preferred against him by the soldiers who had arrested him, to the effect that he had been found out at night without a pass, and had forcibly resisted the guard who attempted to stop him.

"Have you a pass?" asked the Marshal.

"I have not. I did not know that a pass was necessary."

"What is your name, and where do you live?"

"Arthur Arment, of Oak Grove, Fayette county, Georgia."

"Ah, Mr. Arment, I have heard of you, and judge, from what I have heard, that you are not a proper person to be roaming the city at night without a pass. An order for your arrest left this office; you were arrested under it; while you were being brought to the city, you were rescued from your guard by a band of traitors. Is it not so?"

"You say that it is."

The officer wrote a few words on a scrap of paper.

"Orderly, take this gentleman up-stairs to Colonel Marbury, and give the colonel this note."

Arthur was accordingly conducted up-stairs to a small room, where an officer in the uniform of a colonel was seated at the head of a long table, around which were grouped several other men in uniforms.

Colonel Marbury read the scrap of paper, and looked up at the prisoner with a strange expression.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Arment," he said. "Perhaps you will be able and willing to explain some circumstances that have puzzled me. Be seated, sir, and tell me what you were doing in Atlanta when you were arrested."

"By what right do you question me?" was Arthur's calm reply, as he took a seat.

"By the authority of the Confederate States of America. Do you not recognise that authority?"

"I recognise the right of force, when I am unable to resist it. I suppose that is sufficient."

The colonel whispered to an officer near him, who rose and left the room, and then he again addressed the prisoner:

"Mr. Arment, after you had been arrested at your house, and while you were on your way to Atlanta, you were rescued from your guards. Who were the men who effected that rescue?"

"I know nothing about that. I suppose there was a rescue, as I saw nothing more of the guards, but when you ask me how it was done, or by whom, I must plead ignorance."

"Why is that, sir?"

"Simply because I was thrown from my horse, and was so badly injured that I had no consciousness of what happened."

"Have you recovered from your injuries?"

"I have not. A night spent on the floor of your guard-house is not a panacea for bruised limbs."

"You shall not be treated so again, Mr. Arment. Where were you taken after your accident?"

"That is none of your business, sir."

"You are hardly polite, Mr. Arment. I am afraid you have imbibed so many Yankee ideas, that you have learned their manners. You may be obstinate, sir, if you choose, but it will avail nothing, for we are on the track of those scoundrels, and I have no doubt we will catch them. It is believed that they were led by a Yankee spy, who has been in this neighbourhood for a long time, and whom we have vainly tried to lay hands upon."

"I know nothing of any such man," said Arthur.

"You have been represented as an enemy to the Confederate government. Is that charge true, Mr. Arment?"

"I have never done anything to oppose it."

"Are not your sentiments in hostility to those of the Confederate government?"

"You have no concern with my sentiments. You cannot arrest an idea."

"We can arrest the man, however, and keep the ideas from spreading. I think we understand each other, sir. What were you doing in the city last night when you were arrested?"

"That is none of your business, and I refuse to answer."

After some further questioning, which elicited nothing more from Arthur, except a declaration of his Union sentiments, the officer who had left the room returned, and whispered to Colonel Marbury.

"We cannot release you, Mr. Arment," said the colonel, "until we get some more light on this subject. I wish your uncle, Mr. Madison Arment, to be present at your examination, but he is occupied to-day with very important business. You will be placed in confinement, and will be brought here again to-morrow morning."

Colonel Marbury handed a written order to an officer, who requested Arthur to accompany him, and the young gentleman was conducted down stairs, and to prison, under guards.

The prisoner was not taken to the local guard-house, in which he had passed such an unpleasant night, but to the city prison, where he was assigned a cell that was spacious, clean, and reasonably comfortable. He was allowed to purchase such a dinner as he could eat, and soon felt in a better humour with himself and the rest of the world. It was a source of satisfaction to him to feel that he had once performed his duty, and he resolved to do better thereafter, if the opportunity should be afforded him. He even began to doubt whether he should administer to his cousin the lecture that he had promised her, when he could regain his liberty, but he was inclined to think that the reputation of the Arments demanded that such an occurrence should not pass without reproof.

He sent out for cigars and a paper. He lit a cigar, and read in the paper that the forces of the Union were gradually and surely encircling Atlanta, hemming in the army of Hood, and cutting off his communications; that the Federal right, under Howard, rested on the Macon road, and that their left occupied Decatur.

"They must soon evacuate, or fight," thought Arthur, as he puffed his cigar with an air of satisfaction. "I wish I could get out of this place, before either event happens, for I have no inclination to be carried about the country with a retreating army."

When he had finished the paper, and had grown tired of smoking, he began to feel his restraint, to be restless and weary, and to long for some occupation. He took his little flag from his pocket and regarded it reverently. He touched his lips with the blue stone of his ring, and wished that he was free.

As he kissed the ring, he heard a rapping as if in response to his wish. It was not at the door, but sounded as if it came from the wall of his room. It was a light, quick, irregular tapping, like the clicking of a telegraphic instrument, and reminded him of the raps that he and Seth Staples had heard, or had imagined they heard, when they investigated the supposed science of spiritualism.

"What the deuce is that?" he muttered, as he threw away his cigar.

The raps continued, and grew louder and faster.

"There is some jugglery about this," he thought, "or some friend is near, who takes this way of making himself known. I will try him, and learn whether there is any meaning in the noise."

There was a light on the table in the room, which he drew near to that part of the wall from which the sounds seemed to proceed, sat down by it, placed his hands on the top of the table, and asked, with a half smile:

"Are there any spirits present?"

An affirmative rap.

"Do they wish to communicate?"

Rap.

"Shall I use the alphabet?" Rap.

Arthur commenced calling over the alphabet in a low tone, but was interrupted by a number of quick, sharp, irregular raps.

"What does that mean?" he muttered. "Perhaps I am not loud enough."

He commenced to call over the alphabet in a louder tone, but was again interrupted, by quicker and sharper raps.

"Louder yet? Well, my friend shall be satisfied, whether it is a spirit or a mortal."

He drew his chair nearer to the wall, and raised his voice as much as he dared to, as he called over the alphabet. When he reached the letter T, there was a rap from the wall, and he wrote that letter on the margin of his newspaper.

It was slow and tedious work, but his curiosity excited him to persevere, and when the communication appeared to be finished, he put the letters together, and spelled out the following sentences:

"To-night, at seven, guards will change. At eight, find your door unlocked. Take leave of the prisoner as you walk out."

"Really," ejaculated the young gentleman, "this is important, if true, and I am greatly obliged to my unseen friend. Will you tell me who you are?"

An affirmative rap.

Arthur called over the alphabet as before, and the letters that were indicated, when he put them together, read as follows:

"A friend of the blue stone."

"I am satisfied," he mused, as he leaned back and lighted a cigar. That token is sufficient. But how, in the name of wonder, did my friend of the wall know anything about my mysterious ring and its azure stone? He must certainly be a spirit, and connected with the fair vision that has visited me in my dreams. A friend of the blue stone ought to have more than ordinary means of knowledge, and I will do as he directs. At all events, it is very easy to make the experiment, and there can be no harm in it."

As there were no more raps, he tore off the margin of the paper on which he had written, and destroyed it. He then placidly puffed his cigar, and waited as patiently as he could for the appointed time.

He sent out for his supper at an early hour, so that he might have good inward preparation for an adventure, and then smoked a cigar until seven o'clock. When that hour arrived, he heard a tramping and a talking below, from which he concluded that the guards, in and around the prison, were being changed. His rapping friend had spoken the truth, thus far, and Arthur felt that his communication could be relied upon.

As soon as his watch told him that it was eight o'clock, he stepped to the door, tried it, and perceived that it was not locked. He stepped out into the hall, saw that no one was in sight, and said, as if speaking to some one within the room:

"Good-night, sir. I will come again in the morning. I will call on your friends to-night, and see if anything can be done to effect your release."

He closed the door, and took the precaution to lock it and put the key in his pocket. The door of his cell was near the head of the stairs, and the young gentleman walked directly down, and out of the door, humming a tune as he went.

"Been to see a prisoner, sir?" asked a soldier who was on guard at the entrance of the prison.

"Yes. Poor fellow, he takes it very hard, but I think he will be released to-morrow."

So saying, the young gentleman stepped into the street, humming a merry tune, and rejoicing in his freedom. As he had nearly a mile to go, to reach the house in which his cousin was located, he turned into a side street, to avoid observation, and walked rapidly. He was following his fate, as he thought, and he did not consider it worth while to attempt to escape from the city.

A brisk walk soon brought him to the house, and he lightly mounted the steps, with an unwonted feeling of freedom and satisfaction. Fortunately for him, as he thought, the door was not locked, and he noiselessly entered the house. He was, indeed, following his fate, and he could know nothing of the important experience that awaited him within those walls.

CHAPTER X.

Why Tarriest Thou Here?

As soon as Arthur entered the house, he closed the door behind him, and stepped softly into the parlour. He had hoped to surprise his cousin, but he surprised no one, for the room was empty. He looked around for a few moments, and was about to call a servant, when he heard a voice that made him pause and start.

Adjoining the parlour in which he then was, was a room that had lately been used by Mr. Madison Arment as a sort of library or reception room. It was known as his private room, and, as such, was respected by the household. A door opened into it from

the parlour, and another from the main hall. The door toward the parlour was always kept locked, and Madison Arment carried the key, a precaution that resulted in leaving the keyhole open.

It was from the private room that the voice proceeded by which Arthur had been startled. It was the voice of his uncle, raised somewhat above its ordinary tones. The young man heard such words as "General," "dispatch from Richmond," "immediate attack," and these had strongly attracted his attention. He had previously heard his uncle say that the house had been honoured by the presence of prominent Southern generals, and he felt convinced that some important questions, connected with the army of General Hood and the condition of Atlanta, were then being discussed in the private room of Madison Arment.

Our hero immediately performed the undignified and unheroic act of bending down and looking in through the keyhole. He saw his uncle seated at a table with a rather young-looking officer, whom he recognised, from the descriptions that he had heard, and from the wooden leg that he was caressing, as General Hood. A map lay on the table between them, on which the general was pointing with a pencil.

As Arthur listened, he thought that he was justified, as a Union man, in doing so, for the conversation was highly important and intensely interesting. The purport of it was, that the General had received explicit orders from Richmond to attack the Federals, and endeavour to beat them, before giving up Atlanta. His plans had been laid accordingly, and his troops were being massed against the Federal left, for the purpose of making an attack in force, the next day, or the day after the next. The number of men that could be brought to bear upon a given point, and the number of the enemy that would probably be opposed to them, were carefully estimated, and the chances of success were fully discussed.

"If we should fail," said the general, pointing to the map, "there is only this route of retreat left us. If we should be compelled to retreat, it will be your duty, Mr. Arment, and that of other influential men in the State, to arouse the people, to hurry forward recruits, to bring out the militia, and to aid us by procuring supplies and transportation. You must feel that this is the crisis in the fate of Georgia, for, if Sherman gets possession of Atlanta, he will only use it as a new base of operations for a devastating march through the State, or he may cut loose from it altogether. In either event, you will be at his mercy, unless my army is largely reinforced."

"It hardly seems to me that failure can be possible," said Madison Arment. "The enemy must have greatly weakened his line, in lengthening it as he has lately done, and there must be a weak place somewhere. You may rely upon me, however, general, to do all that I can, and to induce others to follow my example. My own influence is considerable, and I wield, through the man-

agement of the extensive estates of my nephew and my niece, a large property influence, which will be used to the best of my ability, for the benefit of the Confederacy."

"Are your relatives true to the cause, or are they indifferent?"

"Concerning my niece, I can speak with confidence. She is a true Southerner, and has often declared herself willing to devote her all, and her life, if necessary, to the good cause. I cannot say so much for my nephew, for he is sadly tinctured with Union ideas. He has never objected to my making such use of his estate and servants as I thought proper, but I know that he is a Union man at heart, and he is so obstinate that he can neither be frightened nor coaxed. At present, however, he is under lock and key, and is not in a position to do any harm. If you should be compelled to retreat, General, I hope that you will take him with you as a prisoner, for he has been quite unruly of late, and I am afraid that he might do us much damage."

"Thank you, uncle," thought Arthur. "I am now aware to whose kindness I was indebted for my arrest, and shall know how to appreciate your solicitude for my interest. General Hood need give himself no trouble about me, for I do not care to make the journey. I have no desire to be flanked through the State of Georgia by General Sherman."

He had heard all that he wished to. He had heard enough to excite him greatly, and he left the keyhole. He thought that the news he had heard would be of great value in the Union army, if it could be received there. He thought that he had then a splendid opportunity to prove his faith by his works, and carry the information to the Union lines, if he only knew how and where to go. But he had so long been a recluse, that he knew little of the situation of affairs, and had none of the resources and expedients that so quickly come to those who are called upon to play parts in the great drama of war. Besides, he was weary; his sleep of the night before having tired him more than it had rested him. After a little perplexing thought, he concluded that he would steal up stairs and quietly go to bed, refresh himself with a good sleep, and consider, in the morning, what was best to be done.

He left the parlour, and found a negro servant in the hall, who brought him a lamp and some matches, with which he went up stairs. As he did so, he thought he saw the flutter of a muslin dress in the hall, near the door of his uncle's private room; but he was not certain, and took no further notice of it, especially as he did not then wish to be observed. He directed the servant to say nothing to Mr. Arment about his being in the house, and entered the chamber in which he had first been favoured with his wonderful vision.

Before Arthur laid down, he again drew the light table to his bedside, placed his lamp upon it, and laid some matches and his little flag by its side. He then undressed, extinguished his light, and com-

mitted himself to a soft and pleasant bed. As he laid his head on the pillow, his conscience reproached him with having neglected a golden opportunity of doing his duty and proving his faith by his works. He felt that such an opportunity might never occur again, and that he would have reason to regret having suffered the chance to pass unimproved; but he was weary and still sore, the downy bed was very enticing, he was ignorant of the best way to do that which he knew ought to be done, and he hoped that new strength and greater energy would come to him in the morning. Thus he silenced the voice of conscience, and fell asleep.

It was not long before he was awakened, as he had been once before in that room, by the sound of music; but this time it was only the soft tinkling of a guitar that saluted his dreamy senses. He listened with pleasure, as he lay there half asleep, until the guitar tinkled out a merrier and more martial measure, and two sweet voices sang the air of "Red, White, and Blue." The singing was soft and low, but the well-remembered strains awoke the dormant patriotism in the heart of Arthur Arment, and made him keenly sensitive of the duty that he had left unperformed. But he crushed down his feelings of regret, and gave himself up entirely to the delicious sensations awakened by the illusion.

"I was sure," he thought, "that my bright and gentle guardian would not desert me for ever. She will visit me again to-night, for the music heralds her approach. Thank God that happiness can come to me in dreams, though it is far from my waking hours! I wonder what new development there is to be—whether I am to receive another token besides the flag and the ring."

He was soon answered, for a soft, mellow and misty light was diffused through the room, enabling him to see, though indistinctly, the outlines of a female form, robed in white. It was the same that had already visited him twice, and he felt a thrill of untold happiness, as he gazed upon it, and recognized the fair face, the braided brown hair, and the wondrous eyes of his cousin Carrie. This was not the Carrie who had forgotten the past, who had repelled his suit because he could not become a convert to the heresy of secession, and who met her lover in such an unmaidenly manner in the night-time; but it was the pure, gentle, loving and patriotic angel of his dreams, who always appeared to counsel and bless him.

His thrill of happiness increased to an ecstasy, as the figure raised its hand, and addressed him in those musical tones that he had longed to hear:

"Arthur Arment, you believe in the Union, but you do not prove your faith by your works. You are true to the old flag, but you do nothing to show your devotion. Your conscience accuses you, and your heart cannot commend you."

The words were reproachful, and the countenance of the figure seemed sorrowful. Arthur felt the truth of the accusation, and was pained by it.

"It is true, beautiful vision," he said, scarcely able to raise his voice above a whisper; "but what can I do to prove my faith and to show my devotion? Tell me, and I will obey your counsel, if it leads to death. I have your tokens, the flag and ring, and cherish them above all my possessions. Tell me how I shall act, and nothing that you bid me do shall be left undone."

"You have learned," answered the figure, "that which would be of great value to the cause you profess to love. Make known what you have learned to the soldiers of the Union. Carry to them the message that is on your flag. Go to the small brown house that stands alone by the fair ground, and you will meet a man, to whom your ring will be a token. He will direct you further."

The figure moved to the table, as lightly as if floating in air, took up the diminutive flag, kissed it, and replaced it on the table. As it did so, the light died away, the guitar which had been playing a pleasant interlude ceased its tinkling, and the figure vanished as if it had melted into the darkness.

"It is strange," thought Arthur, "that I always awake as soon as that figure disappears and the dream is over. Perhaps, though, I may have dreamed it hours ago; and yet it seems as clear and fresh to my memory as if it had been actual. I believe I will light my lamp, and try to discover whether I am really awake now."

Striking a match, he lighted the lamp, and, as he turned up the wick, he perceived a paper lying on his flag. He hastily opened and examined it. It was a small scrap of very fine, light paper, almost like tissue paper, on which were scrawled, as if by a very delicate hand, and with a very delicate pen, some cabalistic characters that he could not pretend to understand. He held the "fairy paper" in his hand, and gazed at it intently, as if expecting it to melt away beneath his touch. Then the words of his vision struck him suddenly, thrilling him like an electric shock.

"She told me," he thought, "to carry to the Union lines the message that was on my flag. This is the message, and there must be a meaning attached to it. She told me that I would meet a man who would give me directions, at the little brown house by the fair ground. Ah!"

Arthur Arment had good reason to know that little brown house, for it was there that Carrie Chappelle had met the man the night before, when he had followed her.

"There must be reality in this!" he exclaimed. "I am surely awake now, and this paper that I hold in my hand is a tangible and substantial thing. Perhaps my visions may have been something more than dreams. At all events, there has always been left with me some actual and abiding token. But it is idle to reason about now, for I have no time to lose. I have a duty to perform, and must neglect it no longer. Now, if ever, is the time to prove my faith by my works. I will obey the directions of the vision,

whatever may be the consequences. If this paper does not melt in my hands, it shall be delivered at its destination. Whether it is real or not, I will go, and will be thankful that I have been aroused to a sense of my duty."

Without any more reflection, the young gentleman rose, hastily dressed himself, placed the little flag and the scrap of paper in his vest pocket, quietly descended the stairs, opened the front door, softly closed the spring-lock behind him, and sallied out into the darkness.

The resolution and energy that he had hoped would come to him in the morning, now filled his breast, and he felt as no one can feel who is not inspired by a good and holy purpose.

CHAPTER XI.

Running the Gantlet.

THE night was cloudy and quite dark, and the young gentleman had walked but a short distance, when the rain commenced to patter among the leaves of the trees and on the sandy path. The patter soon increased to a pour, and Arthur Arment was then convinced that he was awake, for the rain was a very damp reality. Being thus satisfied that he was in the full possession of his senses, he felt in his pocket for his "fairy paper." It was still there, and he went boldly on, unheeding the drenching rain, the loud peals of thunder, and the vivid flashes of lightning. He had a purpose in his heart; he had a duty to perform; he was about to prove his faith by his works; and he felt that he deserved to undergo a penance for his previous shortcomings.

Buttoning his coat, and shielding his face from the driving rain with his large slouched hat, he walked on rapidly until he reached the small brown house near the fair ground. He was not mistaken—it was the same house at which Carrie Chappelle had stopped, when he had followed her, the night before.

He looked around, but saw no one. Then he gave a low whistle, and a man stepped out from the shadow of the house, and stood before him. The stranger was dressed in a grey uniform, over which was thrown a dark overcoat, and his face was shaded

by a slouched hat. Arthur thought that he recognised the soldier with the heavy beard, who had given him the note when he was arrested at Oak Grove, but he felt that it was no time for questions and explanations.

"Who are you?" asked the man.

Arthur thought of the words of the vision—"You will meet a man to whom your ring will be a token," and he held up the finger that wore the precious circlet. As he did so, the darkness was lighted up by an unusually brilliant flash of lightning, and the blue stone in the ring seemed to shine with an unearthly lustre.

"That is sufficient," said the man. "What do you want?"

"I wish to be directed to the Union lines."

"Come with me."

Feeling again in his pocket, to be sure that his piece of paper was safe, Arthur followed his guide silently, through the thick darkness and the drenching rain, until they reached a line of rifle-pits, a rough breastwork of earth, thrown up from the inside, with a deep ditch on the outside. Here they stopped, and the stranger pointed through the obscurity, across the broken ground, at a little point of light that was just visible in the distance.

"Do you see that camp-fire yonder?" he said.

"I believe I do."

"That speck of light, I mean. Keep your eyes on it, and be careful not to lose sight of it, for that is the Union picket line. There is another line of rifle pits between us and that light, but I don't know whether it is guarded to-night or not. You must proceed carefully when you reach it, and you may have to take your chance, and trust to your legs. If you reach the pickets, ask to be taken to the General in command. The word is *love and union*, and that will carry you through. Good night, and good luck to you!"

So saying, the stranger started back, leaving Arthur alone in the darkness. The young gentleman slipped over the breastwork, where he waited until a flash of lightning gave him a plain view of the ditch, and then floundered through the mud, to the other side. He moved on as fast as he could, considering the darkness and the rough ground; but he had not gone far, before he was startled by a sharp cry of "Halt!"

Instead of halting, he fixed his eye on the distant light, and ran toward it. Another order to halt increased his speed, when his running was brought to a sudden termination by a stumble and a fall, which precipitated him into a shallow gully. It was a fortunate accident for our hero, for a volley was fired from the Confederate lines as he fell, and he heard the bullets whistle over his head.

Deeming an humble attitude the safest, he crawled along the ground, sheltering himself by its inequalities, until he reached the

other line of rifle pits that his guide had mentioned. The rebels had probably thought that their volley had killed him, and had made no pursuit.

As Arthur climbed over the breastwork, his form was plainly revealed by a flash of lightning, and he was saluted by several dropping shots. He felt a sharp twinge in his left arm, clapped his hand upon the spot, withdrew it covered with warm blood, and knew that he had been shot.

He slipped down under cover of the breastwork, wrapped a handkerchief around his arm, above the wound, and tied it as tightly as he could with his left hand and his teeth. Then he started ahead again, picking his way over the broken ground, toward the light that had been his beacon. He now thought himself nearly out of range, he was partially protected by the embankment in his rear, the Union fire loomed up larger and brighter, and he felt secure.

While he had been working his way through the darkness, and even while he was running the gantlet of the rebel rifles, his mind was busy, pondering and wondering about his strange experiences. He wondered whether there was not more reality than fancy in his dream—whether his guide that night was the same Confederate soldier who had communicated with him at the time of his first arrest—how he knew about the flag in his pocket, and the ring on his finger—what motive Carrie Chappelle could have had in meeting that man at night, and in such a lonely place, and how it happened that the words of his dream, if it was a dream, had so strangely proved true to the letter.

The more he pondered and wondered, the more he was puzzled, and the more inexplicable the whole affair appeared. His reflections were suddenly terminated by a hail in front, of "Halt! Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Advance friend, and give the countersign."

Arthur advanced, and as he had no countersign, he surrendered himself to the picket. An officer was called, who inquired his business.

"I wish to see the General in command."

"Have you business with him?"

"Yes. I have important information which I can give to no one but himself."

"How shall I know that you are to be trusted?"

"The word is *Love and Union*."

"That is sufficient. Follow me, and I will take you to headquarters immediately."

The young gentleman followed his guide, past rough lines of breastworks, through rows of white tents, and among camp-fires that were smouldering on the wet ground, until they reached a tent in front of which a large flag drooped from a pole. As they en-

tered this tent he perceived a weather-beaten officer, with grey streaks in his hair, sleeping on a pallet, an orderly standing by the opening of the tent, and an aid writing on a rough table. Arthur's companion whispered to the aid, who awoke the sleeping officer.

"A gentleman from Atlanta, General, who has just entered our lines with important information."

"Who is he? What is it?"

Arthur answered by handing him his scrap of "fairy paper."

"Here, Captain Adams," said the General, when he had glanced at it, "you have the key to this cypher. Translate this document for me."

The aid took the paper, poured over it a few moments, referring to a memorandum, and said:

"It is from a trusty friend, and informs us that the bearer is entirely reliable, and can give us important information."

"Glad to hear it," said the General. "Be seated, sir. It must indeed be important information that could tempt you out, on such a dangerous errand, in such a stormy night. What is your name?"

"Arthur Arment."

The aid looked up, rose from his chair, and extended his hand to the young gentleman.

"Arthur Arment! I am glad to meet you. I have not seen you for years. Have you forgotten me?"

Arthur recognised, in the bronzed countenance of the speaker, a former classmate at college, and heartily grasped his hand.

"I have not forgotten you, Adams, and am rejoiced to see you. We meet under strange circumstances."

"Is it possible that you, Arment, with your large estate and your numerous negroes, are not upholding the rebellion?"

"It is even so, Adams; but I am ashamed to say that I have done nothing for the good cause until to-night."

"I hope you have not come to ask protection for your slaves," said the General. "We do not interfere with the negroes, but it is our policy to allow them to act as they please, and the rule cannot be departed from."

"I have come for no such purpose, sir, but to bring important information, and the sooner you know it the better."

"You are wounded, Mr. Arment. You seem faint. Your wound must be attended to."

"Yes, sir; I was struck in the arm while passing over to your lines, but it is only a flesh wound. Let me do my errand, and then, if you please, I will have it dressed."

"I have some excellent brandy here. Drink some, and it will revive you."

Arthur tasted the brandy, which seemed to give him strength, and proceeded to relate the substance of the conversation that he had heard at the keyhole of Madison Arment's private room.

The stern features of the General relaxed into a smile of satisfaction as he listened. and he thanked the young gentleman very cordially.

"This is really important and valuable information," he said. "You have done the cause of the Union a great service to-night, sir. We have been expecting such a movement, however, and they will find us prepared. Captain Adams, you had better take your friend to the surgeon, and have his arm dressed. He is wet through, and the consequences may be unpleasant. Try another glass of brandy, Mr. Arment."

Arthur swallowed the prescription, and left the tent with his new-found friend. A surgeon was soon found, who dressed the wounded arm, and the young gentleman accepted the hospitality of Captain Adams, who provided him with dry clothing and a comfortable bed.

In the morning, with his arm in a sling, he walked around among the camps with his friend, and was surprised to observe the numbers, efficiency, and spirit of the Union army. His eyes were gladdened by the sight of the old flag, and his ears by the well-remembered national airs that he had not heard for years, except in his nightly visions.

The expected attack was not made until the next day, and resulted in a bloody repulse. Arthur watched the rebel masses dashed again and again upon the steady Union lines, with the courage of desperation, only to be hurled back, shattered and bleeding. At last Hood drew off his routed and discomfited troops, with a heavy loss in killed, wounded and prisoners, and the fate of Atlanta was sealed.

Arthur remained within the Union lines, for the purpose of having his wounded arm properly attended to, until the rumours of the evacuation of the city, which had been frequently repeated, were confirmed. He then felt a strong desire to visit Oak Grove, and prevailed upon his friend, Captain Adams, to accompany him thither. Adams obtained permission to go, and leave to take a small escort of cavalry, and they set out, Arthur being provided with a horse from his friend.

As they were obliged to make almost the entire circuit of the city, to keep within the Union lines, and as the condition of Arthur's arm would not permit him to ride fast, they did not reach Oak Grove until about noon, the day after they started.

As they rode up in front of the Arment mansion, Arthur's body servant, a fine young negro, came out to meet him.

"Oh, Mars'r Arthur!" he exclaimed, "I's mighty glad to see you. Whar' you been gone dis long time, and what's the matter wid your arm?" "I have been absent on business, Henry, and I hurt my arm a little. Is all well?"

"Yes, sah; all is berry well. Your uncle is in de house, Mars'r Arthur, rummagin' about in your room."

"In my room! What the deuce does that mean? Some more of his kind intentions, I suppose. Captain Adams, will you have the kindness to remain here for a few moments, with your men, while I go into the house? I wish to meet my uncle alone."

The captain promised to comply with his request, and Arthur silently walked in at the front door.

CHAPTER XII.

How he "Flanked" his Uncle.

A PLEASANT morning, a few days after the unsuccessful attempt of Hood to break the Union line, found Madison Arment in the parlour of his nephew's mansion at Oak Grove. Like the boy in Byron's "Dream," he was

"Alone, and pale, and pacing to and fro."

His countenance wore a troubled look, though there was a glance of triumph in his eye. He seemed nervous and perplexed, as if he was not more than half-satisfied with the results of his labours in behalf of his idolized Confederacy, and he appeared to be debating the propriety of a step that he had not quite made up his mind to take.

"I wonder," he said, "how Arthur fares in his confinement. Of course, my directions have been obeyed, and he has been made as comfortable as possible, but the restraint must be very irksome to him. He has been clamorous for an examination, I suppose, and it cannot be delayed much longer, unless we are compelled to evacuate Atlanta. In that case, he must be taken with the army as a prisoner, or must be sent to Richmond, and I have no doubt that a few weeks of imprisonment, with the prospect of a still larger dose, will cure him of his treasonable proclivities. It seems very hard to treat him so, but it is necessary, and is really an act of kindness. It would be a great loss to the Confederacy, if his property-influence should be withdrawn from its support, and he would probably lose both his property and his liberty, if not his life. Therefore, a temporary imprisonment, such as will bring him to his senses, is for his own good and that of the cause. If I had not been absent, endeavouring to arouse the people to a sense of their duty at this crisis, I believe I would have granted him a trial, as a matter of form, and to give him a chance to espouse the right cause; but, I must first learn what is the prospect of holding Atlanta. I must hasten to the city, when I have finished my

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business here, have a conversation with General Hood, and visit Arthur in his prison. Perhaps he may have become reasonable, and may be willing to submit to the constituted authorities."

"As for Carrie, I need give myself no uneasiness about her. She is true to the South, and will remain so, in spite of any defeat or discouragement. She will not remain in the city if the Yankees enter it, but will go with her friends, for she hates the sight of a blue uniform. If Atlanta is taken, it will enrage her still more, and she will put no bounds to her detestation of the enemy and her exertions on behalf of the cause. She has repulsed her cousin's suit because of his treasonable sentiments, and I cannot conceive of anything more likely than that to bring him to terms. I have no doubt that she loves him, but it is equally certain that she will refuse to marry him, unless he changes his course. He will have to choose between liberty and her love, and imprisonment without her. There can hardly be any question of the decision at which a young man like Arthur, of ardent temperament, luxurious habits, and unenergetic disposition, will ultimately arrive. He will choose his liberty and his love. It is only a question of time.

"It is a great pity that Hood was repulsed in his attack upon the Federal left. Who would have supposed that he would find such a force ready to meet him? There must be treachery in our camp, for the enemy seem to have information of all our movements and designs. The future will tend to discourage the people still more, although it was almost a bloodless repulse, and our troops withdrew in safety when they discovered that the attempt could only be made successful by great slaughter. I suppose we will be compelled to evacuate, unless re-enforcements are brought forward more rapidly. In that event, I shall leave this place in charge of the faithful overseer, and it will be safe, for the Yankees will not be likely to come so far down this way, and Arthur will not be at hand to bring them here. If there is any danger, I will send a force, and have the niggers carried further South, for I don't doubt that I can use them to good advantage.

"Now for Arthur's room. It really seems a mean and ungentlemanly thing to overlook his private papers, but all means are justifiable that will advance a righteous cause. I have good reason to suspect that he has been in correspondence with the enemy, or with some of their secret agents. If it were not so, how could it have happened that he was rescued from arrest, just at the nick of time, by a band of Tories, who were led, as Lieutenant Ashbrook said, by a noted spy? There must have been collusion between him and his rescuers. If I can obtain proof of his treasonable correspondence, I can hold it over him, and produce it when necessary, for the purpose of continuing his imprisonment if he remains unruly. Perhaps I can also discover some of the domestic traitors who have been conspiring against the government in this neighbourhood. Surely, any means are justifiable for such an end."

Madison Arment was not a bad man at heart. He was a gentleman by birth and education, kind, benevolent and true. But he was a believer in secession, an ardent supporter of the rebellion. His belief had been built up on sophistry, and the same sort of sophistical reasoning influenced all his conduct. He thought that every thing—his time, his property, his life, his relatives, his duty, even his honour—should be made subservient to the cause that he advocated. He thought that any act that could advance the interests of his section, in what he called its “struggle for independence,” was the very thing that ought to be done. There had been a time when he had considered the surreptitious inspection of private documents a piece of meanness to which he could not possibly descend, and he had no words of contempt too strong for a person who would be guilty of such a heinous offence. But, his feelings had undergone a radical change in that respect. The same reasoning on which he founded his belief in the heresy of secession, was sufficient to bear him out in the commission of the despicable act he then contemplated. He argued that it was for the good of the cause, and that was a complete answer to all objections, even to those of his own conscience.

He walked up to his nephew's room, entered it, and closed the door. A desk stood in a corner, in the drawer of which, as he knew, Arthur kept his private papers. The drawer was locked and Arthur carried the key, but Madison Arment was prepared to overcome that slight obstacle. He took from his pocket a small skeleton key, which he inserted in the lock, and the bolt turned readily.

Before opening the drawer, the astute schemer hesitated for a moment, and a slight flush overspread his face, as his conscience touched him in a tender spot. But his emotion was transient, and a slight movement of his hand laid open the secret treasures of his nephew.

Madison Arment sat down in front of the desk, and proceeded to examine the papers. He took up a bundle, looked them over, read one, and replaced them.

“Nothing but college nonsense,” he muttered.

Another bundle seemed to interest him, for the papers had been neatly folded and carefully preserved; but after a slight examination he threw it down with an air of disgust.

“Poetry! It is really a pity that the young man has nothing to employ his time. Writing such trash as this is a very poor occupation. But I care nothing for his own composition. I am seeking for letters. Ah! here is a bundle. The handwriting is Carrie Chappelle's. There may be something of importance in them, and it is worth while to examine.”

The self-appointed inspector opened a number of the letters, and hastily glanced over their contents, replacing them when he had finished.

"Nothing to be learned there," he muttered, "except that Carrie seems to have been almost an abolitionist in those days. But that was only boy and girl nonsense, and she has got bravely over it. What is this?"

He took from the drawer a scrap of paper, on which some pencil writing was dimly visible. By holding it up to the light, he was enabled to decipher the following sentence:

"Submit quietly to the arrest. The flag that was pinned upon your coat will protect you. Be true to the Union, and fear nothing. "A FRIEND."

"What, in the name of wonder, does this mean?" he exclaimed. "Ah! I think I understand it now. It was received at the time of his arrest, and must have been written by one of the band of Tories who rescued him. I thought he would not have submitted so peaceably, unless he had been sure of a rescue. I wonder what was meant by the flag that was pinned upon his breast? He will find that no flag can get him out of the prison at Atlanta. I have found the proof now, Arthur Arment, and have you where I want you!"

As he spoke these words in a triumphant tone, the door of the room opened, and he was confronted by Arthur Arment himself!

"I am glad to see you, uncle Madison," said the young gentleman, as he entered with a pleasant smile. "When did you arrive? But you seem to be busy, and I will not interrupt you."

Madison Arment did not faint, but his face crimsoned up to the roots of his hair.

"You must not suppose, Arthur," he said with a strong effort to recover from the surprise, "that I was examining your papers for the purpose of gratifying an idle curiosity, or with any but a patriotic motive. The safety of the country sometimes demands—"

"Oh, never mind that, uncle," interrupted the young gentleman. "It is not of the least consequence, I assure you. I am not disposed to make any objections. Anything for the good of the cause. Were you surprised to see me, uncle?"

"Yes, Arthur, I confess that I was. I had heard that you were under arrest at Atlanta."

"Indeed! How did you get the news? It is true that I was under lock and key, and in a position to do no harm; but I objected to being flanked out of the city by that reckless Sherman, and had no desire to be carried off as a prisoner by General Hood, if he should be forced to retreat, although I know that I have been quite unruly of late, and that there is reason to fear that I might do much damage."

As Madison Arment heard his nephew repeat, almost word for word, the language that he had used in his conversation with General Hood, he was astounded, and the crimson hue of his face changed to a deathly white. He concluded that it was best to change the subject.


"I am glad to hear that you have been released," said he, "and hope that you have given satisfactory evidence of your loyal intentions. I am afraid, however, that your liberty would be but short-lived if the authorities should see this paper that I have found in your desk. Who is this person who signs himself 'A Friend,' and tells you to submit quietly to the arrest, and fear nothing?"

"I do not know, uncle. I wish you could tell me."

"What is meant by the flag that was pinned to your coat?"

"That is another mystery that I would like to have unravelled. But this is idle talk, uncle. If you have finished ransacking my desk, permit me to lock it again."

"Certainly, Arthur; I have found what I was seeking. I am afraid that you have escaped from your arrest again, or have broken your parole, and I feel it to be my duty to order you to return to Atlanta, and deliver yourself up to General Hood, until this matter can be investigated."

"I hardly think that I would find him there, uncle. When I last heard of him, he was getting away from that city as fast as he could." 

"Evacuating Atlanta! Is it possible? I must hasten to join him, for I have important intelligence to give him. I command you, Arthur, to accompany me immediately."

"Without intending any disrespect, uncle Madison, I must positively refuse to do so. As you are anxious to have my company, your wish shall be gratified, for I am compelled to request you to return with me to the Union lines. It is for the good of the cause, and I am sure that you will not object, especially as I have a sufficient force to back my request."

The young gentleman opened a window, and pointed to Captain Adams and his escort of cavalry, who were drawn up in front of the house, at the same time inviting them to enter.

"Arthur Arment," said his uncle, "you will repent of this outrageous conduct."

"I hope not, sir. It is for the good of the cause, and will be only a temporary confinement. You have been quite unruly of late, and I am afraid that you might do much damage. Have the kindness to walk down stairs."

Fretting and fuming, and greatly chagrined at the unpleasant manner in which the tables had been turned upon him, Madison Arment did as he was ordered, and found himself surrounded by the blue uniforms of the Union.

Arthur ordered some refreshments for his friends, and after they had satisfied their appetites, and had drained their glasses to the success of the Union arms, greatly to the disgust of Madison Arment, that gentleman's horse was brought out, and he was politely requested to accompany his captors. He complied, rather ungraciously, with the request, and the party started towards Atlanta.

It was dark when they reached the extreme right of the Union lines, where they concluded to spend the night, accommodating Madison Arment with a tent and a guard.

CHAPTER XIII.

A "Ten Strike" of the Mysteries.

In the morning, Arthur and his friends, with his uncle as a prisoner, continued their journey along the Union lines, until they had reached the centre, near where the Northern railroad enters the city. Captain Adams met an officer of his acquaintance, whom he asked what was the news concerning the evacuation of Atlanta.

"It has already been evacuated," was the answer, "and our troops have entered and taken possession."

"If that is the case, Captain Adams," said Arthur, "we may as well enter and take possession, also. I suppose my uncle will not object to trying the accommodations that he so kindly provided for me."

Madison Arment, gloomy and silent, thought it not worth while to offer any objection, and the party turned their horses' heads toward the captured city.

When they entered the town, they saw the flag of the Union floating over the principal edifices, and waving from the windows of many private houses. The blue-coated soldiers were gaily marching through the streets, elated at having at last reached the goal which they had laboured so hard to gain. They saw smoke arising from the ruins of buildings that had been fired by the retreating foe, and saw files of rebel stragglers that were being brought in under guard.

The prison in which Arthur had been confined was in the possession of the Union soldiers, and he conducted his uncle thither, Captain Adams detailing two of the cavalymen as a guard.

"I am sorry, uncle," said the young gentleman, as he "did the honours" of the prison, "that my circumstances are not such that I can act under cover of some one else, as you did when you caused my arrest. It would have a much better appearance, and would probably show more consideration for your feelings, than appearing on the scene myself as a prominent actor; but it cannot be helped at present, and I feel sure that you will excuse me, as it is all for your own good and that of the cause. This is the room in which I might have passed many weary days and nights, if I had chosen to remain in it. Suppose you try it for a while, uncle. If the medicine was a good one for me, it cannot but prove bene-

ficial to you, as yours is a worse case of unruliness than mine was. If you wish anything from the outer world, the guard will procure it for you. The same privilege was accorded to me. Let me advise you, when you next have a private interview with General Hood, to make sure that there are no eavesdroppers about."

"Arthur Arment!" exclaimed his uncle, "I would not have believed this of you, though I might have known that a supporter of the Yankee Government is capable of any mean action."

"Except examining private papers," interrupted the young man. "Make yourself as comfortable as possible, uncle. I will call again soon. I trust that General Hood will not miss your valuable services in arousing the people and hurrying forward recruits."

Captain Adams directed the guard to take particular care of Madison Arment, as he was a political prisoner, and the two friends separated, the captain having business at the headquarters of his corps.

Arthur pinned his diminutive Union flag upon the lappel of his coat, where he had first seen it, mounted his horse, and rode directly to the brick house near the fair ground, where he hoped to see his cousin Carrie. When he approached the house, he was surprised to see a large Union flag waving from one of the upper windows.

"Some officers have taken possession of the premises," he thought. "I am sorry that I did not persuade Adams to come with me, for I may be refused admission to my own house."

As he drew nearer, he perceived that the parlour windows were open, and heard several voices singing the "Star-Spangled Banner," to the accompaniment of the piano. He distinguished sweet female voices, and the manly tones of male singers.

"This is, indeed, a metamorphosis," he thought, "or I am dreaming in the daylight. I suppose Carrie has gone with her rebel friends, and I have lost her."

He dismounted, tied his horse, and hastily ascended the steps. The door was partially open, and he entered without ceremony. His left arm was still in a sling, but his usually pale face was flushed by exertion and excitement. He walked into the parlour, and saw a sight which, as he afterwards declared, he could not forget while he lived.

At the piano sat Laura Clymer, with red, white and blue colours in her hair. At her right hand, with the same tri-coloured head-dress, and looking more radiantly beautiful than ever, stood his cousin, Carrie Chappelle. At the left was a fine-looking young gentleman, and another, whose face Arthur could not discern, stood in the shadow of the window-curtain. They were singing the concluding words of the "Star Spangled Banner," but the song ceased, and he entered the room.

"My dear cousin!" exclaimed Carrie, advancing to meet him, with extended hand, and with her face absolutely glowing with

emites, "I am glad and proud to meet you, especially on such an occasion as this. We saw you coming, and tried to give you a glorious Union welcome. Permit me to make you acquainted with an old friend of yours and a dear friend of mine."

As she spoke, the man who stood in the shadow of the curtain stepped forward, and Arthur instantly recognised the well-remembered features of the friend who had separated from him more than two years before—of Seth Staples! He wore an undress military uniform, and was smiling as if there were no such words as trouble and sorrow in his dictionary. Arthur was so astonished and bewildered that he hardly knew what to say.

"How is this, Seth?" he asked, as he mechanically grasped the hand of his friend. "What does it mean? How do you happen to be here? Did you enter the city with the Union forces?"

"Not a bit of it. I have been here a long time. Let me make you acquainted with a friend of ours, John Clymer."

The other gentleman bowed, and smiled quizzically.

"I have met Mr. Arment before," he said.

"I must have forgotten it," answered Arthur, "for your face is not familiar to me."

"But yours is perfectly familiar to me, and it is not likely that I will ever forget it."

"Carrie, I must beg you to explain this to me," said Arthur, turning to the beaming countenance of his cousin. "I am bewildered. I am utterly at a loss to understand it. Your political opinions must have undergone an entire revolution. I have never seen such a great and sudden change."

"There has been no revolution, Arthur. I have not changed at all."

"Not changed! You told me that what uncle Madison had said was true—that you were an advocate of the Southern cause—that you would devote your all to it, and would die for it, if necessary."

"You are greatly mistaken. I said that I was true to my country, and ready to devote myself to the good cause. I do not recognise any cause as a good one that is not the cause of my country."

"You spoke in such a manner, that I was convinced you were a secessionist. How did Seth Staples come here, and how long has he been in this neighbourhood?"

"I have been in and about Atlanta for nearly a year," answered Seth. "After I entered the Union army, I felt that my duty called me in this direction, and was detailed on special service. You can imagine what sort of service it was, when I tell you that I have made this house my head-quarters, and have been in Atlanta during the entire siege, and the greater part of the campaign, except when I have been travelling to and from the Union lines. Our rebel friends have been watching and seeking for me, but

have never been able to lay their hands on me, and my life has been spared to witness this glorious consummation of the long and arduous labours of our army."

"I thought," said Arthur, "that I heard your voice one evening, when a gentleman accompanied Miss Clymer to the door. Do you remember the circumstance, Miss Clymer?"

"Certainly. It was Seth; and I was obliged to send him away in a hurry, for fear that he would be discovered."

"But you told me that it was a relation of yours."

"I told you the truth. *We have been married nearly six months!*"

"Indeed! Allow me to congratulate you both; and may your union never be broken by secession. But I am still in the dark. Please inform me why I have not been permitted to know anything of this—why Seth has not disclosed himself to me—why I have been induced to believe that my cousin and her friend were ultra secessionists—why I have not been admitted to your confidence, and allowed to aid you in your plans."

"We were not sure of you, Arthur," answered Seth. "We feared that you were only a half-way Union man, and that you were too careless and unconcerned to join in our enterprise with such heartiness and good-will as we could have wished. Besides, it was important that your uncle should not have the slightest reason to suspect that Miss Chappelle and Laura differed with him in opinion. We feared that your known love for your cousin, in connection with your political bias, might have compromised us with him, and we thought that the strongest proof she could give to her uncle, of her loyalty to the Confederacy, was to repulse your suit, because you were not a rebel."

"I think you were wrong, Seth. All's well that ends well, however. You ought to have known that I would have been glad to join you, and would have aided you to the extent of my ability."

"We know it now, Arthur, but we seriously doubted it then, and thought it necessary that you should be tried before you were trusted. You were tried, and were not found wanting in the hour of need. You have proved your faith by your works."

"The trial might have been too severe," suggested Arthur. "At one time I was on the verge of desperation."

"We had a remedy to counteract the ill effects of the experiment, and to prevent you from doing anything rash. Your dreams seemed to afford you a great deal of consolation."

"They were my only hope and comfort. Were they produced by your influence?"

"They were manufactured by us, as I may say. We had prepared for them before you first came to the house. The music was produced in the addition adjoining your room. My knowledge of chemistry enabled me to make the light, which was introduced through apertures in the wall. The panelling near the mirror, and the windows that opened on the balcony, were

useful to me, as you may suppose. The vision that appeared to you was Miss Chappelle herself, and it must be admitted that she played her part admirably."

"Why did you tell him that?" exclaimed Carrie, as blush after blush ran in waves over her face. "Was it wrong, Arthur, or unmaidenly? I could not resist the desire of speaking to you, as I could not speak at any other time. As uncle Madison says: 'It was intended for the good of the cause.'"

"I cannot call it wrong, cousin Carrie. It was the most pleasant experience of my life, and I would not have missed it for a great deal. As explanations are in order, perhaps you will not object to informing me who was the man whom you met, at night, by the little brown house, and for what purpose you met him."

"It was only Seth," answered Carrie. "A new password had been agreed upon, and it was important that I should know it that night. The word was *Love and Union*. I was afraid that you would overtake me that night, and compel me to explain, and the consequences might have been unpleasant, if not serious."

"Ah! It is strange how simple a mystery is when you find it out. I suppose it was Seth, also, who gave me the note, assuring me of protection, when I was arrested at Oak Grove."

"You are mistaken there," said Seth. "I was at the head of the party that rescued you from Lieutenant Ashbrook and his men, but the Confederate soldier who gave you the note was John Clymer. He was conscripted several months ago, but managed to get detailed for duty in Atlanta, and when he was *captured*, on that occasion, the rebels lost one unwilling soldier."

"How did he know about the flag that was pinned on my coat?"

"He ought to have known about it, as he put it there himself, while you were asleep. It was John, also, who left a Union ring on your flag, when you were at the house of Mrs. Bennett, Laura's aunt. You may have noticed that our band was not complete at that time. There were only two performers, Miss Chappelle and John, as I was absent from the city, and Laura was obliged to remain in charge of this house."

"Why was I not favoured with a vision the next night that I slept here?"

"Chiefly because your uncle Madison was expected that night, and we did not dare to disturb the quiet of the house."

"Why was I selected to carry to the Union lines the information of Hood's intended attack? Why was not such an important errand intrusted to a person who was more experienced, and better acquainted on the other side?"

"I can answer that," said Carrie. "Seth Staples and John Clymer were both absent, and we had no other messenger. Besides, no one but yourself had heard the conversation between uncle Madison and General Hood. I was going to listen at the

door of the private room, as I had often done, but you were there, and I could only get a vague idea of what was said. It was necessary, therefore, that you should be sent, and Laura and I took the best measures that we could contrive to induce you to go. I was terribly afraid, when you spoke, that I would be discovered. It was an excellent opportunity, also, to test your love for the cause, and enable you to *prove* your faith by your works. But I assure you that it was no part of the plan that you should get a bullet through your arm."

"It was only a flesh wound, and of no consequence."

"We will nurse you now, cousin Arthur, and will not suffer you to run into danger again."

"As the explanations appear to be satisfactory," said John Clymer, "suppose we join our voices and instruments in a Union song, to show Mr. Arment what we can do, when we are under no restraint."

The instruments were accordingly produced. Laura Clymer seated herself at the piano, while John Clymer took the violin, Seth Staples the flute, and Carrie Chappelle the guitar, and all their voices, except that of Staples, blended with the instruments in the glorious strains of the "Star Spangled Banner." Arthur, who sung a clear and melodious tenor, threw his whole soul into his voice as he joined in the chorus, and the music soon collected quite a crowd of Union soldiers in front of the house.

CHAPTER XIV.

That's What's the Matter.

ABOUT an hour after the impromptu concert was ended, Arthur Arment, whose wound had been dressed, and who had been refreshed by a good dinner, found himself in the garden with Carrie Chappelle. They were alone, but the society of themselves seemed sufficient. They were talking of Seth Staples—of his exploits and his adventures, and of his loving wife, who had been known as Laura Clymer.

"I can now understand," said Arthur, "what you meant when you assured me that Laura was not grieved at the absence of Seth."

"I spoke the truth at that time, for he was seldom absent from her. We were obliged to be very careful to prevent uncle Madison from meeting him, but were successful in that, as in the rest of our plans."

"He is a noble fellow, and I would always have honoured and

respected him even if we had taken opposite sides in this struggle. I forgot to ask who was my spirit-rapping friend, who directed me how to walk out of prison."

"It was Seth, disguised as a Confederate soldier. He had no other means of communicating with you at that time. He unlocked the door of your room while the guards were being changed, and thus opened the way for your escape."

"That proves that our investigations of spiritualism were not in vain. I was almost disappointed, Carrie, when I learned that my spiritual visitations, in what I supposed to be my dreams, were realities, for I presume they will cease, as their object has been gained."

"Do not speak of that, Arthur," implored Carrie. "I can hardly think of it without blushing, and I am afraid that I acted *very* improperly. But you must pardon me, for my intentions were good. It was all 'for the advancement of the cause,' as uncle Madison says."

"Indeed, Carrie, I had no thought of blaming you, and can see nothing improper in that loyal masquerade. On the contrary, I thank you for the most blessed experience that my life has yet known. But I have a charge to bring against you, and am not quite sure that I am not cruel enough to accuse you of wilful deception. You persuaded me to believe that you were a rebel, and there was surely deception in that."

"But it was all 'for the good of the cause,' Arthur."

"Let it pass, then; but let me advise you to be careful what you do 'for the good of the cause,' or you may find yourself in as bad a predicament as uncle Madison."

"How is that—what has happened to him?"

"Never mind. He is safe. But I have not finished my charge. You told me that you could not, or must not love a man who was a traitor to his country. Am I a traitor to my country, Carrie?"

"No, Arthur. I believe you are true to the Union, and you have proved your faith by your works. Your wounded arm speaks for you."

"Can you love me, then, Carrie? You know how much I love you. Can you not return my love?"

"I can, and I do," answered the girl, as she turned away her head to hide her blushes. "I have always loved you, Arthur."

"I thought so," murmured the young gentleman, in a satisfied tone, as he kissed her hand. "Is there any reason, then, why we should not be married?"

"You are very hasty, sir, in speaking of marriage. Do you not know that a young lady needs time to consider such a proposition?"

"I must require you to answer it immediately, Carrie, and in the affirmative, 'for the good of the cause' requires that we should be married."

"If it is 'for the good of the cause,' I suppose I must submit, and refer you to my—my uncle."

"I suppose it would be proper to procure uncle Madison's consent. He will expect to be consulted, at all events. He does not deserve any consideration in the matter, but I will make it a point to see him immediately."

"You talk wildly, Arthur. You would have to seek him in the army of General Hood, and it would hardly be safe for you to venture there."

"I shall not go so far, and will engage to procure his consent this evening. He had *me* imprisoned, for the good of the cause, and I have turned the tables on him, for the good of the cause."

Arthur then told his cousin how he had found Madison Arment engaged in examining his private papers, at his Oak Grove mansion, and how he had arrested him, had brought him to Atlanta, and had placed him in retirement in the same prison in which he had himself been lodged by the order of his uncle. Carrie was greatly amused, and regarded it as an act of retributive justice to which a man of Madison Arment's principles ought not to object.

"I must leave you now," said Arthur, snatching another kiss from her fair hand. "I must visit our rebel uncle, and obtain his consent to our marriage, and then—the good of the cause requires that there should be no delay, Carrie."

The young gentleman hastened to the prison, and was admitted by the guard to the room in which he had left his uncle. He found that well-meaning rebel seated on a chair, and gloomily contemplating the small extent of prospect that was visible through his barred window.

"Good-evening, uncle," said the young gentleman, as he took a seat. "I entered without knocking, but that is the custom in this hotel; at least I found it so when I was lodged here. Have you nothing to occupy your mind, but thoughts of General Hood's line of retreat? I was allowed the luxury of a newspaper when I was here, but the Confederate journals have taken French leave, and the Union paper is not yet out. If it was, I suppose you would not care to see it."

"Arthur Arment," said his uncle, with a look that was intended to be very severe, "have you come here for the purpose of insulting me? I would not have thought that your father's son could be guilty of such an action."

"By no means, uncle. I am here to console and comfort you. I know that I was very lonely when I was confined in this apartment, and I supposed that you might feel the need of company. I am also here for a special purpose, to ask you to give your consent to my marriage with my cousin, Carrie Chappelle."

"Is she still in the city? If she is, my consent would be worth nothing to you, for she will never marry you."

"But she will. At least, she has promised to."

"She cannot mean it. Is it possible that she would consent to a marriage with you, a friend of the Yankees, and an ally of the abolitionists?"

"She held out as long as she could, uncle, but I accomplished a flank movement, in imitation of General Sherman, and she was compelled to surrender. All that we want now, is your consent to the marriage." "I will not give it, Arthur. I will not sanction such an unnatural alliance."

"I am sorry, for your consent would make the affair much more pleasant to all concerned. If you are determined not to give it, we must be content to do without it, and our marriage will take place while you are shut up in this unpleasant prison."

"Am I to consider myself as the prisoner of the Federal Government, or of my nephew?"

"You are my prisoner at present, uncle, and it is fortunate for you that you are, as the Government might not be disposed to be as lenient as I am willing to be."

"How long am I to be detained in this place?"

"You can be released at any time, on taking the oath of allegiance to the United States, and agreeing to remain within the Union lines."

"I will never take such an oath. I have sworn to die in the last ditch, rather than submit to the Yankee despotism, and I will keep my word."

"Then you must admit that the good of the cause requires you to be kept in confinement."

"I will demand a trial. Nothing but my sentiments can be alleged against me."

"You had better not, uncle. If I should tell all I know, those unscrupulous Yankees would consider you too dangerous a person to be at large, and would undoubtedly keep you a prisoner until the close of the war. You had better accept my terms. I want your consent to my marriage with Carrie, not that it is necessary, but because it seems right and proper that we should have it. If you will give that consent, I will guarantee that you shall be released, with liberty to follow General Hood as far as he chooses to travel—even to the last ditch."

"I will agree to that," said Madison Arment, after a few moments' reflection, "if I can be released immediately. If Carrie has made up her mind to the marriage, I suppose it is useless to withhold my consent. You may consider it given."

"I would like to have it in writing, if you please, uncle."

"Very well."

Arthur sent out for pen, ink and paper, which were brought in, and the wished-for consent was written out.

"I must now bid you good-evening," said Arthur; "but as soon as I can see the officer in charge of the guard, you shall be released, according to agreement."

Putting the paper in his pocket, he left the prison, and sought his friend, Captain Adams. Having found that officer, he soon persuaded him to put on his best uniform coat, and accompany him, with an army chaplain, to his house in Atlanta. Arrived at the house, he introduced his friend as Captain Adams, and the chaplain as Captain Kennaird. He then left Seth Staples and his wife to entertain them, while he intimated to Carrie that he desired a private interview.

"When they were alone, he took the paper from his pocket, and informed her that he had obtained the consent of their uncle.

"As you are satisfied on that point," said he, "we have nothing to do but to be married." "Yes—after a reasonable time."

"There is no time like the present, my dear, and no time is so reasonable as the right time, which is now. Events are very uncertain, during such a war as this, and we might be separated to-morrow. Besides, I told you that the good of the cause admits of no delay."

"You are too hasty, Arthur. There should be some preparation."

"No preparation is necessary. We have no friends that we care about, except those who are present. Perhaps uncle Madison might revoke his consent."

"But the churches are closed, and we could not find a minister."

"We need no church to sanctify the ceremony, and there is a minister in the house. The gentleman whom I introduced to you as Captain Kennaird is a chaplain in the United States army, and he is waiting for you."

As this flank movement completely demolished the strategy of Carrie, she was again compelled to surrender. The two returned to the parlour, and then, after the due allowance of blushes, tears and hesitation, Arthur Arment and Carrie Chappelle were pronounced man and wife, and received the congratulations of their friends then present, who were few, but true.

As soon as the ceremony was finished, Arthur dispatched his friend, Captain Adams, to bring Madison Arment from the prison, and that gentleman shortly made his appearance, looking very sullen and dissatisfied.

As he entered the house, and walked into the parlour, the group was clustered about the piano, singing "Rally Round the Flag," in the most uproarious manner.

"What does this mean?" he indignantly demanded. "Is this parlour already turned into an abolition concert room? What do you mean, Miss Chappelle, by wearing the colours of the enemy in such a conspicuous manner? Do you submit so tamely to the invaders?"

"It means," answered Carrie, "that I am a friend to the Union, and always have been; that I never was a rebel, in thought or in deed."

"Is this possible? Are you capable of such deception?"

"Don't forget your motto, uncle; everything for the cause. Allow me to make you acquainted with Captain Seth Staples, and Mrs. Staples."

"That Yankee here? And the husband of Laura Clymer? I am astonished and disgusted. Arthur, I revoke the consent that I gave you."

"It is too late, uncle, for we are already married."

"I disown you both. I despise and detest you, as traitors and deceivers. I hope that I shall never see your faces or hear your names again. I will leave this house and this God-forsaken city immediately, and will try to forget that I have such unworthy relatives."

"You had better stay with us until morning, uncle," said Arthur. "You could not leave the city at night, and it will be necessary to procure a pass for you."

"I will do so. I wish to be shown to my room immediately."

"Certainly," answered Arthur, as he went to call a servant. "We will send your supper to your room, as you do not fancy our company."

The next morning, Madison Arment, mounted on his horse, and provided with a pass, shook the dust of Atlanta from his feet, and went in search of "the last ditch," which was then supposed to be located in the neighbourhood of Macon.

Arthur Arment, after converting into money and movables as much as possible of his wife's property and his own, told his negroes to look out for themselves (which they did, as a general thing, by seeking protection in the army of General Sherman), and carried his beautiful bride to the peaceful North, being disinclined to "prove his faith by his works" before the honeymoon was over. Laura Staples accompanied them, as her husband had received a staff appointment, and his duties would not permit him to leave the army.



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